

Final death toll in Haj stampede still unclear

DUBAI (R) — The final death toll and the identities of scores of Muslim pilgrims killed in a stampede near Mecca during the Haj may not be known for several days, diplomats in Saudi Arabia said Wednesday. "The situation is still very confused and it'll be a number of days before we know how people were killed," one said, adding that most of the dead were apparently not carrying any identification. Reports from journalists covering the annual pilgrimage for Muslim media and accompanying the pilgrims from their countries of origin have put the total killed in Monday's stampede at more than 200. The dead were mainly from Asia and Africa, they said. Saudi Arabia has yet to make any specific statement on the incident, which witnesses said broke out as people crowded at an enclosure at Mina where pilgrims hurl stones at three poles of rocks symbolising the devil. Mina is 15 km (10 miles) from the holy city of Mecca. The worst of recent tragedies at the Haj was in 1990, when up to 1,500 people were killed in a stampede in a pedestrian tunnel at Mecca.

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Arafat's wife denies divorce

ROME (R) — The wife of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat Wednesday dismissed Italian press reports that the couple were about to divorce as part of a slur campaign to slow Palestinian self-rule. Suha Arafat issued her denial through a Rome-based Arab journalist after the reports appeared in several Italian newspapers. "I am at home at the side of my husband President Arafat," her statement said. She also denied reports that her uncle, George Hawa, had been arrested last week in Tunis on Arafat's personal orders and interrogated. "I deny most categorically the reports carried today about an alleged marital crisis," Suha Arafat said.

King Hassan appoints new premier

RABAT (R) — King Hassan of Morocco Wednesday appointed Abdellatif Filali as the country's new prime minister, the official news agency MAP said. Filali, a former foreign affairs minister, replaced Mohammed Karim Lamsarani, who has led a government of technocrats since last November. The MAP report gave no indication why Lamsarani was replaced.

3rd of immigrants to Israel not Jewish

TEL AVIV (AP) — Almost a third of recent arrivals from the former Soviet Union are not Jewish, a government report said, sparking calls Wednesday for tightening liberal immigration laws. "We're making a mockery of the goal for which Israel was established," said lawmaker Avraham Ravitz of the United Torah Jewish Party, speaking on Israel radio. He said Israel's Law of Return, granting citizenship to immigrants with at least one Jewish grandparent, should be annulled because it "is today being exploited by... hundreds of thousands of people who are not Jewish." Mr. Ravitz spoke after population registry officials told legislators on Tuesday that 29 per cent of the 66,000 immigrants from the former Soviet republics in 1993 had no Jewish background. Many of the non-Jews are spouses, in-laws or stepchildren of the Jewish immigrant, all included in the law of return.

Ghali eyes second term at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali said Wednesday that he would request a second term in the position at the end of 1996 if he is healthy. "The question will be raised in 1996 and it will depend on my own physical capacities," Dr. Ghali, 71, said. Meanwhile, Dr. Ghali asked a top-level Norwegian foreign ministry advisor on the Middle East to become U.N. secretary general's deputy. The Norwegian foreign ministry said here Wednesday. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ingvar Havnen said Dr. Ghali requested Monday that Terje Roed Larsen become his deputy on Middle Eastern issues.

Israel sold Rwanda ammunition

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel sold hundreds of thousands of dollars of ammunition to the Rwandan government just before the country disintegrated into an orgy of tribal killing, an Israeli daily reported Wednesday. Israel's foreign ministry approved the sale by Israeli military industries seven months ago, saying Rwanda was a legal government facing rebel insurgents, the respected Haaretz daily said. Israel and Rwanda do not have diplomatic ties. Israeli Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gadi Baltiansky had no comment on the story. A statement from the defence ministry said, "the ministry does not relate to the activities and results of all defence exports." Israel has long trained and equipped African armies.

Sanaa eases offensive on Aden to give negotiations a chance

U.S. enters mediations to end the war

SANAA (Agencies) — The Sanaa government has decided against storming the southern Yemeni capital Aden immediately as it wants more time to persuade southern secessionists that the country should stay united, a minister said Wednesday.

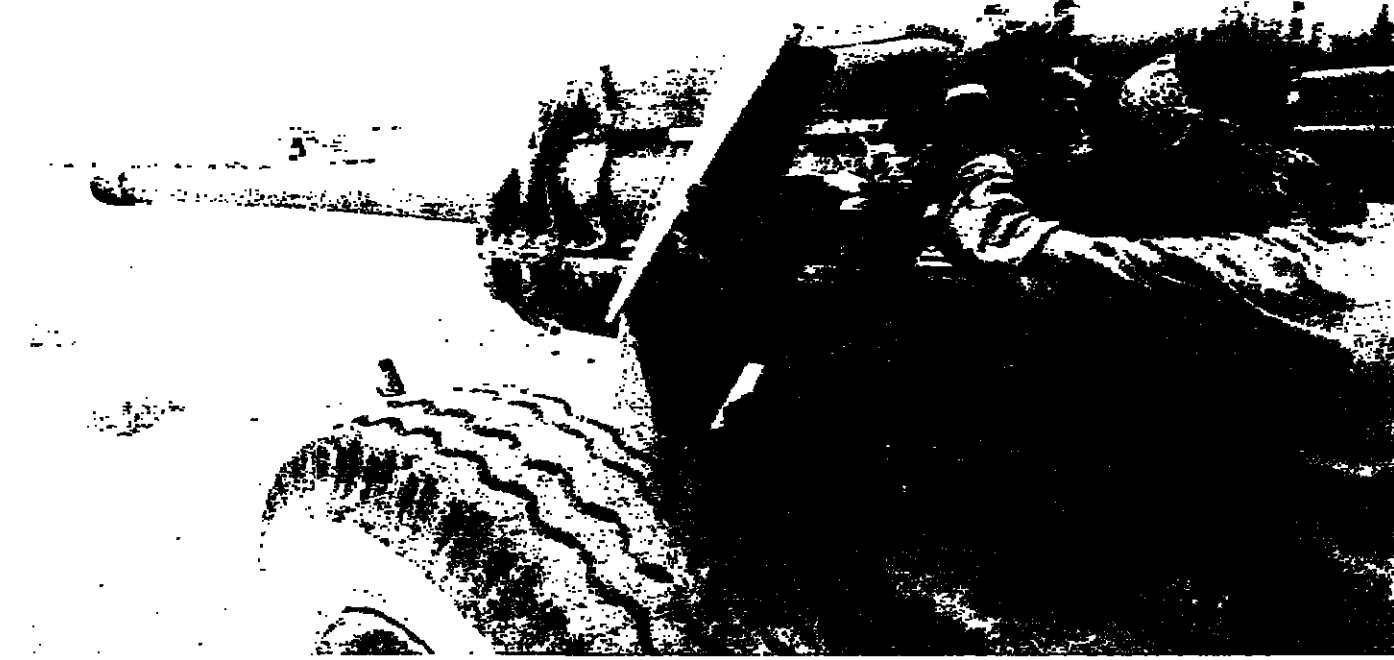
Planning Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani told reporters that the northern forces also had other military tasks to complete before an attack on Aden would be feasible.

"We have committed ourselves not to be hasty in entering Aden, in the hope of any political solution... We won't enter by force without giving a political solution a chance," he said.

The Sanaa government is negotiating with moderate members of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) of southern leader Ali Salem Al Beidh on a settlement which would reunite the country without the need for fighting.

Meanwhile, the United States has contacted three Arab countries in an effort to help broker a ceasefire between rival leaders in the Yemen civil war, an Egyptian diplomat said.

Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were contacted because they "are the three Arab countries



A southern Yemeni fighter adjusts his artillery gun near Aden Tuesday (AFP photo)

best placed" to ensure "an indirect dialogue between the northern and southern Yemenis," the diplomat said.

The three have already urged the warring sides to lay down arms and start talks to end the civil war which broke out on May 5.

The aim of the U.S.-led

mediation was to "preserve Yemen's unity without resorting to force," the diplomat added.

He hinted that northern troops loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh would be called upon to accept a ceasefire in exchange for the south giving up its unilateral declaration

of independence.

"There is still a chance of ending the fighting in Yemen," he said.

U.S. charge d'affaires Edmund Hull told reporters following talks with Egyptian Minister Amr Musa, for the second time within 24 hours, that Egypt and the United

States were working "to obtain a ceasefire in Yemen and facilitate the opening of talks between the two protagonists."

A U.S. diplomatic source said Mr. Musa and Mr. Hull discussed "practical steps to end the fighting and encourage

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Police disarm Fateh activists

Israel has contingency plans to reenter Gaza

GAZA (Agencies) — Palestinian security forces in the Gaza Strip have for the first time disarmed members of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's faction, a Fateh official said Wednesday.

"Security men heard gun shots in Gaza, and found two Fateh activists with guns, so they took them (the weapons) away," said the official, Abdul Salam Abu Askar.

He said the Palestinian police, locally called the Palestinian National Security Forces, would issue statements on Sunday appealing to Gaza residents to hand over their weapons in special security centres.

The police are responsible for security in the Arab population centres vacated by Israel last week under a self-rule accord with the PLO.

Israeli officials have demanded the PLO tighten its reins on Gaza after two Israeli soldiers were shot dead last Friday in a guerrilla attack at the Erez Border crossing point.

Palestinians are armed to the teeth in the Gaza Strip. One Palestinian security official said there were about 13,000 weapons in the hands of Fateh members alone.

Mr. Abu Askar told Reuters that 133 Fateh Hawks, a group that had been at the forefront of armed resistance to Israeli occupation, started on Wednesday a 45-day training programme in Gaza before their incorporation into the security forces.

Fateh Hawks and Palestinian police commanders reached an agreement earlier this month on enlisting the Hawks. The group had complained it was being excluded from security arrangements in the Gaza Strip and the other self-rule area in Jericho.

"They are being trained in what used to be the headquarters of the Israeli military governor. They will not leave that place until the training course is over," Mr. Abu Askar said.

But the PLO faces a cash crisis just as it needs money to fund the Palestinian police and the civil administration in the first weeks of self-rule, Palestinian and donor sources say.

At the same time, the PLO leadership in Tunis has increasingly tried to bypass a World Bank master plan to develop the Palestinian economy, and has been wooing individual donors and large Western corporations, said development economists.

Zakaria Al Agha, an appointee to the Palestinian authority, said last week the PLO was working on how to pay the civil administration's 7,000 employees. Israel has paid their wages until the end of this month.

"We are not at full capacity because the donor states have unfortunately been slow in transferring the money they promised. We need money quickly to bring more men and equip them properly," Colonel Abdel Moti Al Sibawi said in Gaza.

Palestinian sources said Nabih Shaath, the PLO's negotiator during the Cairo talks leading up to the self-rule accord, visited Gaza last week to hand out money to the Palestinian police.

About 3,000 policemen have been deployed in Gaza for two weeks now. Most of them are sleeping on floors with little or no basic facilities and relying on hand-outs from Gaza residents. Some say they have not been paid for nine months.

Dr. Shaath did not say how much he brought over. Israeli media reports suggested it was about \$400,000.

According to Palestinian and World Bank calculations, the police force needs about \$105

million in its first year of operation.

Meanwhile Israeli media reported Wednesday that the Israeli army has contingency plans to reenter Gaza if the first phase of the peace process did not succeed.

"It is clear that if it won't work in the coming weeks and months, we will no doubt draw our conclusions," southern commander Maj. Gen. Matan Vilnai told Israeli newspapers on Wednesday. "The army is a body that creates plans of all sorts, and today we do have contingency plans for returning to Gaza."

On Wednesday an attempt by the Israeli military commander in to travel the main north-south road was blocked by Palestinian police who refused to let him pass and stone-throwing, Palestinian reporters said.

Brig. Gen. Doron Almog was stopped at a Palestinian police checkpoint near the road that leads to the Jewish settlement of Netzarim, just south of Gaza city.

An Israeli military officer in the region said the general told the Palestinian lieutenant he wanted to travel to his headquarters at the Gush Katif group of Jewish settlements,

Gazans could face starvation

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinians in the Gaza Strip will face "starvation" if they are not allowed to return to work in Israel by the end of the week, a Palestinian official warned Wednesday.

"If in the next 72 hours our merchants and workers are not given permission to cross into Israel, there will be starvation," Freih Abu Mudein, who is member of the Palestinian self-rule authority, told AFP.

Israel last week sealed off the new Palestinian self-rule area when Muslim militants killed two soldiers at Gaza's main Erez crossing.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Gaza would remain sealed off until the Palestinian police in charge of the strip erected check points at the crossings in order to prevent such attacks.

The Palestinian authority's efforts to talk Israel into reopening the crossing have failed so far, according to Mr. Abu Mudein.

"We are discussing around the clock with the Israelis, but we have not been able to achieve anything yet," he said.

"If necessary, we will ask the U.S. sponsor (of the Middle East peace talks) to intervene, otherwise we will try and open up a communication link with Egypt" at the Strip's southern edge, he added.

Gaza's economy is based on remittances from its workers who have jobs in Israel.

Palestinian statistics put at 60 per cent the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip, which covers 370 square kilometres and has nearly 800,000 inhabitants.

Last week's decision to seal-off Gaza came as an additional measure restricting the Palestinians' access to Israel's work market.

The closure of the Gaza Strip also affected trade and industry, according to Palestinian economist Salah Abdul Shafi.

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Vatican admits Jews persecution

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Vatican has acknowledged for the first time that the Catholic Church had a role in centuries of persecution of the Jews, including the World War II Holocaust, according to a document obtained here Wednesday. In a draft document yet to be ratified by Pope John Paul II, the Vatican says: "A terrible mixture of religious, social, economic, political and racial hostility created the historical basis for the European Jews being driven on their deadly way toward the Shoah (Holocaust)." And the three-part paper, a copy of which has been obtained by AFP, acknowledges that the "Church as a whole offered no effective resistance to the Nazi persecution and extermination." It has been hailed by Rabbi David Rosen, head of the committee charged with overseeing relations between Judaism and the Catholic Church, as "an exceptional and historic" document.

Lebanon tries 7

Abu Nidal suspects for killing Maayteh

BEIRUT (R) — Seven persons went on trial Wednesday in Lebanon's first full-scale trial for the murder of a foreign diplomat since the 1975-90 civil war in which several envoys were killed or kidnapped.

The accused, all members of the radical Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) of guerrilla leader Abu Nidal, face possible death penalties if convicted of shooting Jordanian Embassy First Secretary Nabeh Al Maayteh on January 29.

Mr. Maayteh was gunned down in broad daylight on a street in mainly Muslim West Beirut in a killing that revived memories of Beirut's past during the 1970s and 1980s as the murder and kidnapping capital of the Middle East.

Lebanese authorities quickly rounded up suspects and charged 15 alleged FRC members with the killing.

Only three accused, including the suspected gunman Youssef Shabaan, were in the heavily guarded court when the trial opened before Lebanon's five-judge judicial council which handles cases concerning national security.

The council is Lebanon's highest court. Its decisions cannot be appealed but death sentences must be approved by Lebanese President Elias Hrawi.

Mr. Shabaan is accused of

firing 10 pistol shots at Mr. Maayteh in his car "until he was sure of his death."

The other four accused, who are still being hunted, are being tried in their absence.

The prosecution said the eight remaining original suspects had not yet been fully identified but were also being hunted.

Political sources speculated at the time that Mr. Maayteh was gunned down to stop Jordan going ahead with a peace agreement with Israel.

Abu Nidal's group vehemently opposes Arab-Israeli peace talks but has denied involvement in the killing.

Several foreign envoys, including a U.S. and a French ambassador, were assassinated in Beirut during the civil war and Lebanon has only just begun bringing the killers to justice.

Hussein Tlais, a pro-Iranian Lebanese Muslim militant, was sentenced to life imprisonment last month for killing Colonel Christian Goutierre, the French embassy's military attaché, in 1986.

Nameq Ahmad Kamal, a Lebanese suspected of taking part in the 1976 killing of U.S. Ambassador Francis E. Meloy, embassy economic counsellor Robert O. Waring and their Lebanese driver, Hrawi.

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Mitterrand insists on arms embargo

Clinton defends policy

PARIS (AFP) — President Francois Mitterrand Wednesday insisted he was opposed to lifting the arms embargo on ex-Yugoslavia, as French pressure groups backing the Sarajevo government lobbied for an end to the sanctions.

Mr. Mitterrand, who spoke at a cabinet meeting, warned that proposals to exempt the Muslim-led government from the embargo could trigger an escalation of the Bosnian conflict that could "go well beyond the Balkans," his spokesman Jean Musitelli said.

With France Wednesday playing host to talks attended by diplomats from the European Union, Russia and the United States and by the warring Bosnian parties, Mr. Mitterrand said the "sole alternative to negotiation is war."

In an interview with five European papers Wednesday, the French president added that the future of France's U.N. troops presence in Bosnia would depend on the outcome of an international conference.

"The question (of a pullout of U.N. troops) would be posed if the conference where the Americans, the European Union and the Russians participate is delayed."

"The French proposal is aimed at arranging talks among the factions and the three great powers, which have so far expressed themselves separately."

The French president called for an immediate conference after the Serbs pulled most of their troops out of the eastern Bosnian town of Gorazde, under NATO pressure, at the end of April.

Mr. Mitterrand's Socialist ally, Michel Rocard, who heads the French Socialist Party and the Socialist list for the June 12 European elections, has publicly differed with the president, speaking out in favour of lifting the embargo against the mainly Muslim Bosnian army.

A group of French intellectuals has also threatened to present their own list at the European elections if the mainstream lists do not call for

allowing arms deliveries to Bosnian government troops.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic met with Mr. Rocard and other officials in Paris Monday to plead this cause.

Mr. Rocard, a presidential hopeful, Wednesday urged that "negotiations still be given a chance." But he said "elementary morality would imply that at least if we cannot protect the Bosnians, we let them protect themselves."

The talks with the international contact group on Bosnia-Herzegovina took place Wednesday in Tallioires, a town in the French Alps just across the border from Geneva.

The meeting aimed to reach an agreement on the future carve-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina alongside a general four-month ceasefire, as a prelude to a permanent peace.

Earlier Wednesday, Defence Minister Francois Leotard confirmed that the French military contingent in former Yugoslavia would be dropped by 2,500 men by the end of the year. France, which forms the backbone of the U.N. force in ex-Yugoslavia, now has 6,800 troops there.

By the end of 1994, "we are going to drop the volume of our forces in Bosnia and we are going to regroup them around Sarajevo," Mr. Leotard said on French radio.

France, and later Britain, have both warned they would pull their forces out of Bosnia if there is no breakthrough in the peace process. Britain has about 3,000 troops in former Yugoslavia.

In Washington, meanwhile, President Bill Clinton reiterated U.S. commitment to helping enforce an eventual peace settlement in Bosnia.

Mr. Clinton defended his policy in the former Yugoslavia and promised the United States would play its part in policing an eventual peace accord.

He blasted calls for the United States to unilaterally break the U.N. arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia.

Chemical attacks during Gulf war confirmed — report

WASHINGTON (AP) — Strong evidence exists that Iraq attacked U.S. troops with chemical weapons during the Gulf war, spreading contaminants that have sickened thousands of Americans, according to a congressional report.

The 160-page report, released Wednesday by Sen. Donald Riegle, lists more than a dozen incidents where American troops appear to have been exposed to chemical agents, mainly from rocket attacks.

It disputes Pentagon contentions that there is no evidence of Iraqi chemical attacks during the 1991 war, and criticizes the Defense Department for not having the capability to confirm whether troops were exposed to biological agents.

The report also says that, contrary to Pentagon claims that nerve agent levels detected by the C-130s and other allies during the war were not harmful, monitoring equipment only picks up nerve agents when levels are 1,000 times higher than what is deemed to be hazardous.

Pentagon and intelligence officials will have an opportunity to respond to the report at a hearing of the Senate Banking Committee that Sen. Riegle chairs.

The report includes testimony from 30 Gulf war veterans who say that apparent Iraqi missile attacks were followed by the sounding of chemical agent detectors, the air filling with fumes and burning sensa-

tions on their skin.

Almost all are now suffering from the debilitating symptoms of what has come to be known as "Persian Gulf syndrome."

"There are multiple witnesses to what appear to be best explained as chemical or mixed agent attacks," the report said.

"Symptoms appeared simultaneously with alarms going off (and) Patriots intercepting Scuds."

Sen. Riegle said his yearlong investigation included interviews with 600 American troops, many of whom corroborated reports of chemical exposures.

One soldier stationed in Saudi Arabia reported a loud explosion early in the morning of Jan. 17, 1991, followed by a sound of alarms and a burning sensation on his face. Of the unit's 110 soldiers, 85 now suffer from medical problems.

Two days later, in another part of Saudi Arabia, witnesses reported a sharp odor of ammonia after a "real bad explosion" and more alarms going off.

At another location that day, a naval construction worker said his mouth, lips and face became numb after a loud explosion.

A soldier based near King Fahd International Airport on Jan. 20 said he saw what he believed to be a Scud missile shot down by a Patriot missile. He experienced "a very strong runchy taste, like very bitter burnt taste" in his mouth. He now suffers from bleeding, dizziness, hair loss, joint pain,

insomnia and blurred vision, symptoms common to many returning from the Gulf.

Despite the numerous chemical alerts, troops were told by their commanding officers that the explosions came from sonic bombs.

The report said that in addition to direct attacks, there appear to be three other primary sources of exposure:

— Fallout from coalition bombing of Iraqi chemical and biological warfare plants. Visual and thermal satellite imagery confirms that fallout during the air and ground war moved to the southeast, toward American forces.

— The administration of nerve agent vaccines to troops, some of which act in a manner similar to the actual agent.

— Continuing contact with Iraqi prisoners of war.

The Pentagon and the Veterans Affairs Department have launched several programs to register sick veterans, study their symptoms and search for treatment. But while they acknowledge that the illnesses are real, they say there is no evidence of a single cause.

Sen. Riegle's report recommends declassification of all information on Iraq's chemical and biological warfare programs, a thorough epidemiological study of all Gulf war veterans, a study of the impact of nerve agent vaccines and a presumption of service-connection so sick veterans can receive medical treatment.



Palestinian policemen carry the body of Jihad Asfur during his funeral in Khan Yunis Tuesday (AP photo)

PLO police pallbearers at Hamas funeral

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza (R) — PLO policemen in Gaza were the pallbearers at a funeral for a militant of the Islamic Hamas group which opposes the Israel-PLO peace accord.

About 30 Palestinian policemen took part in the daylight funeral procession for Jihad Asfur alongside 10 armed members of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas's military wing Qassam and thousands of other Hamas supporters.

Four of the policemen carried the coffin and one kissed the body before it was buried. The coffin was transported in a police jeep with Qassam activists sitting on the hood.

The Qassam men, armed with U.S.-made M-16 assault

rifles, and the PLO policemen fired in the air in unison at the military-style funeral.

Israeli forces killed Asfur, 28, Sunday when they demolished a house in the West Bank village of Tufah with anti-tank missiles. The army initially said he was a wanted member of Islamic Jihad, a group also opposed to the accord.

Israeli troops withdrew from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank enclave of Jericho last week under the terms of the May 4 peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Israel has demanded the PLO police prevent Hamas and other opposition groups operating in the self-rule areas

from attacking Israelis.

Hamas took responsibility for killing two Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint between Gaza and Israel last Friday, two days after the Israeli army completed its withdrawal.

Israel never allowed daytime funerals or mass processions for Hamas militants when it controlled Gaza.

Taking advantage of their new freedom, the Qassam gunmen exposed their faces to television cameras. Under Israeli rule, militants only appeared in public with faces masked by headscarves.

The crowd chanted "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) and other Islamic and pro-Hamas slogans.

1st damages for Kuwait invasion to be approved

GENEVA (R) — The first financial compensation to victims of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait is likely to be approved at the United Nations this week, with payment of \$3.0 million in claims, U.N. officials said.

But the U.N. Compensation Commission may have problems coming up with further money, since it could only fund total claims worth billions of dollars if Iraqi sales were resumed, they said.

The commission's governing council opened a four-day meeting Tuesday which is due to discuss the funding shortfall and approve landmark claims worth \$2.7 million from 1,116 victims in 18 countries, U.N. officials and Western diplomats said.

"We consider this very symbolic, as this is the most sensitive category in humanitarian terms — claims for death of a

relative or for serious personal injury," Carlos Altamira, the body's executive secretary, told Reuters.

"The question of funds now becomes very important," he said before the talks began.

The first instalment is part of 5,000 claims from people, mostly Jordanians and Kuwaitis, who were injured or lost a parent, child or a spouse as a result of Baghdad's 1990-91 invasion and occupation.

Each individual is entitled to \$2,500 in compensation, while families may receive a maximum of \$10,000. The money will be distributed by governments.

"It is a nice landmark," a Western diplomat said. "In a relatively short period of time we have moved from ground zero to a process which has begun to decide and pay some claims."

But commission officials are

worried about how they can pay out the next batch of individual claims, worth \$150 million, which the council will be asked to approve next October.

These are the first claims from workers forced to flee or from individuals who claim damages of up to \$100,000.

The commission, which has received claims worth \$81 billion so far, expects the total to double, with corporate and government claims still being filed.

Its only sources of funding are voluntary contributions from governments such as Saudi Arabia and the United States, as well as part of frozen Iraqi assets.

A Turkish-Iraqi plan to flush out an idle oil pipeline between the two countries has worried the commission particularly, since it threatens to bypass U.N. resolutions.

Sudan faces mass starvation — agencies

NAIROBI (AFP) — Sudan, gripped by a relentless civil war, faces mass starvation as less donors increase food aid to two million needy southerners, international aid agencies warned Tuesday.

"The Sudanese are on the brink of a famine as potentially devastating as the one experienced in Somalia in 1992 (which killed an estimated 300,000 people)," said Gabriel Salazar of the French medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF; Doctors Without Borders).

South Sudan has suffered more than a decade of famine, stemming from drought and the displacement of millions of southerners by 11 years of war between mainly Christian and animist southern rebels and the Islamic fundamentalist military government in Khartoum.

Addressing a joint news con-

ference here, representatives from MSF, the British charity Oxfam, Save the Children, the U.N. Children's Fund and the World Food Programme said they had about 20,000 tonnes of food stored in Kenya and Uganda but had no money to airlift it to Sudan.

It costs \$1,000 to fly a tonne of food into the south, a vast undeveloped region of swamps and savannah with few roads.

The agencies appealed to donors to finance an emergency food airlift to the 600,000 most vulnerable people in the three southern provinces of Bahr El Ghazal, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria.

"The failure of the international community to finance the air delivery of this food from Kenya to Sudan within the next three weeks will result in a famine that could be as bad as what Somalia experi-

enced," Mr. Salazar said.

According to MSF, 45 per cent of southerners are malnourished, 10 per cent severely. In the Akon region, 40 per cent of infants aged from 6 months to 17 months were believed to have died of malnutrition or diseases exacerbated by lack of food over the past few months.

Sudan's emergency is being overshadowed by wholesale slaughter in Rwanda and the war in the former Yugoslavia, the aid workers said.

Peace talks in Nairobi between the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army and the government have been adjourned until July.

The army, which launched a major offensive at the end of last year, is steadily gaining ground against the divided rebels, who splintered into two warring factions in 1991.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli soldiers warned of kidnap danger

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (AFP) — Israeli soldiers have been ordered to be on maximum alert against being taken hostage in reprisal for the abduction of a Muslim guerrilla chief, pro-Israeli radio reported Wednesday. The commander of Israel's northern region, General Yitzhak Mordechai, said Israel had "information that terrorists will try to kidnap soldiers" in retaliation for the capture of Mustafa Dirani, said the Voice of the South, run by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army militia. Israeli commandos snatched Mr. Dirani, leader of the pro-Iranian Resistance of the Faithful group, from his home in Lebanon on Saturday in an attempt to trace missing airman Ron Arad, whose plane was shot down over south Lebanon in 1986. Gen. Mordechai did not elaborate but he said during a tour of Israel's "security zone" in south Lebanon Tuesday that Israeli soldiers were ordered to be on maximum alert. Israel has ordered its embassies abroad to tighten security and military officials have said the army was ready for revenge attacks following threats of retaliation from guerrilla organisations, including Hizbollah.

Qadhafi predicts breakup of U.S.

BEIRUT (AP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said in an interview published Wednesday that the United States would break up the same way the former Soviet Union and the Yugoslavia were divided along ethnic lines. He told the London-based Al Hayat newspaper that America is made up of "disharmonious mosaic which will not coexist." "We expect of America's collapse. The blacks will be independent, the Indians will be independent and the whites will be independent, so will the other minorities," Col. Qadhafi said. "It is probable that a civil war will break out in America just like in Lebanon," he said, referring to this nation's 1975-90 strife. Col. Qadhafi said a U.S. leader similar to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev could avoid a bloody disintegration of the United States "if he gave independence to the people of the American states and made the split peaceful." The newspaper said the interview was conducted last week in Col. Qadhafi's arch-foe U.S. warplanes bombed his headquarters in 1986 after Tripoli was implicated in a Berlin disco bombing that killed two off-duty American servicemen.

Pay strike shuts Lebanon's schools

BEIRUT (R) — Most Lebanese schools closed Wednesday as the country's 70,000 teachers held a one-day strike to protest at the government's failure to increase their professional allowances in line with normal practice. Unions demand that the government raise allowances — which make up a large proportion of salaries in Lebanon — in the same proportion as basic pay rises agreed last November. The accord raised salaries by 30-70 per cent depending on pay grades but the government broke with normal practice by saying professional allowances will continue to be based on the old minimums. Ministers in Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri's cash-strapped government, which is trying to rebuild the country after the 1975-90 civil war, have said wages are far too low but it lacks funds to increase them further. Lebanon's General Labour Confederation (CGLT) accuses the government of trying to freeze professional allowances — which it says make up two-thirds of the average pay packet — and called a protest march in Beirut last month on the issue and other grievances. Labour chiefs backed down when authorities banned the demonstration and hinted they were ready to impose a curfew in the capital to stop it going ahead.

Jewish settlers plan Biblical 'Disneyland'

ALLON, West Bank (R) — Israeli settlers, ignoring Israel's accord with the PLO, opened a tourist attraction they hope will be the first stage in a Biblical "Disneyland" in the West Bank. "We want to build a Disneyland of the Bible at the first place you can see Jerusalem coming from Jericho," said Eli Cohen, head of the rural settlements division of the World Zionist Organisation. "It does not matter which way the politics go. This is a rich source of Jewish heritage." The site, in the heart of the land the PLO wants to turn into a Palestinian state, is an attempt to recreate the lifestyle of the Biblical prophets and instill Jewish values in youngsters from Israel and abroad.

2 wounded in Turkish bus station bombs

ISTANBUL (R) — Two people were slightly wounded when four bombs went off in an Istanbul bus station late Tuesday and early Wednesday, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency said. Police said they did not know who was responsible for the attack on Harem Bus Station. There have been at least eight bomb attacks on crowded tourist sites and municipal buildings in Turkey over the last few months. Some of the explosions have been blamed on the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has threatened to bring its 10-year-old fight for control of southeast Turkey to the country's western tourist spots.

Manager of Algerian company killed

TUNIS (R) — The general manager of an Algerian state-owned company was found assassinated inside his car in Algiers, the official Algerian News Agency (APS) said. APS, monitored in Tunis, quoted security sources as saying Abdennour Naciri was found slain near the headquarters of the clothes factory where he worked in southeast Algiers. It said he apparently was the first senior manager to be killed in nearly 30 months of civil strife in Algeria between security forces and Islamic militants. More than 3,600 people, mostly Muslim militants and members of security forces, have been killed in political violence since January 1992 when an army-backed council cancelled a general election which the Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win. In a separate incident, gunmen abducted and killed Algerian lawyer Belghoul Saadi from his home and dumped his mutilated body nearby, the Algerian daily El Watan reported Tuesday.

Teenage soldiers swell ranks in Yemen's war

By Ashraf Fouad
Reporter

ADEN — At a tender age when most children have fun playing at soldiers, Ammar Abdul Hadi fought in an adults' war and came face to face with death.

Abdul Hadi, 13, watched in agony as his brother Mohammad died on the battlefield.

"My brother died... I gave him water, I shook him, but there was nothing. He was dead," he said, carrying an assault rifle more than half his height. Mohammad was 19.

Abdul Hadi is among the youngest combatants to fight in the civil war ravaging this south Arabian peninsula country of desert and mountain.

Disoriented, shellshocked and with no sense of time, he said in a monotone voice that he had been sent to the front

only the night before his first taste of battle.

The conflict, which began on May 4, pits the former Marxist and secular south against the more traditional and tribal north. The authorities in the south have announced their secession from united Yemen, which merged in 1990.

Abdul Hadi, a southern Yemeni, went willingly to war, but many boys are press-ganged into the conflict.

Residents in the southern stronghold of Aden say military roadblocks snatch young men from passing cars and send them to the front where they get a gun, a couple of ammunition clips but no helmets, boots or military gear.

Abdul Hadi said he had received four weeks of military training before being sent to fight northern forces for a large and strategically-placed army

base at Al Anad, north of Aden.

He said 120 infantry soldiers had been sent from the mountains at dawn to fight for the base.

A few hours later, most of his unit of young-clad men wearing slippers or flip-flop sandals was wiped out.

"They all died. My brother died. There were bodies everywhere," Abdul Hadi said later at Ibn Khaldoun Hospital at Lahj, 23 kilometres north of Aden, where he, and another young boy helped take two wounded soldiers.

Abdul Hadi echoed a claim made by most southern soldiers at the front. He said northern troops "are not scared. We fire but they keep coming. They are drugged."

Soldiers on both sides chew the narcotic qat, use of which is a custom in Yemen.

In the first five hours of fighting at Al Anad on May 19, some 40 wounded southerners were taken to Ibn Khaldoun. Many more were taken from this and other fronts to Aden hospitals.

British-educated physician, Imran Al Naguib, who heads the 208 bed hospital, said he had received 19 dead and 408 wounded since the war began. Many who fall in battle are often buried immediately or taken straight to their families.

Aden has called for a general mobilisation of a reservist force which was almost double the size of the 27,500-man regular army before the unity.

It has also opened its weapons arsenal and given many civilians assault rifles to fight but some just run away when they hear their first incoming shells.

On another front, 55

kilometres northeast of Aden 10 young panic-stricken volunteers forced their way into a pickup truck going to Aden when northern rockets landed nearby.

Military police caught them as they entered the city and sent them back to the front. One argued: "We are just going back to get some tea and we will return."

In Aden, one young man said: "Why should I go (to the front)? They have not caught me yet."

Another said when asked why he was not fighting: "I will go when I'm needed. They still do not need me."

An opposition politician stranded in Aden when the fighting started said: "There is a general feeling of passiveness on both sides (north and south)."

"Many people feel this is not

their war. They see it as just a political struggle between the two parties vying for power and not a north-south civil war."

The conflict pits the powerful Yemen Socialist Party of Vice-President Ali Saleh Al Beidh from the south against the north's General People's Congress of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

"We do not like the YSP very much," said a southern volunteer army truck driver. "But as the Arab saying goes 'me and my brother against my cousin, me and my cousin against a stranger'."

Before Abdul Hadi quietly sneaked out of the hospital to return to his family in Aden, he said he would not tell his parents that Mohammad had died.

"I'll say he was wounded or captured or something," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Taratara
18:00 News in French
19:15 Moudi Fantastique Des Animaux
19:30 News in Arabic
20:30 Du Bear's On
21:10 Bony
21:10 Bony
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film

PRAYER TIMES

06:57 Fajr
08:29 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:32 Duhr
15:36 Asr
19:36 Maghrib
21:08 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetfah, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 63785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Assomation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Assomation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Hot weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./max. temp.
Amman 21/35
Aqaba 25/47
Deserts 21/40
Jordan Valley 23/41
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 36, Aqaba 42. Humidity readings:
Amman 9 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	EMERGENCIES	HOSPITALS	QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
NIGHT DUTY	Civil Defence Department 661111 Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341 Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777 Fire Brigade 891226 Blood Bank 775121 Highway Police 843402 Traffic Police 896391 Public Security Department 630352 Price Complaints 605800 Complaints 897467 Amman Municipality 787111 Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121 Overseas Calls 843402 Central Amman Telephone 010230 Repairs 623101 Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101 Jordan Television 773111 Radio Jordan 774111 Water Authority 660100 Jordan Electricity Authority 815815 Electric Power Company 636381 RJ Flight Information 06-53291 Queen Alia Int'l Airport 06-53291	AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813613/32 Khadija Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6 Akhel Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2 Jabal Amman Maternity 642362 Mahas, J. Amman 636140 Palestine, Shmshani 664171/4 Sheuani Hospital 660131 University Hospital 845845 Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279 The Islamic, Abdali 6661237 Army, Marka 891611/15 Qura National Hospital 602240/50 Amal Hospital 674155 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323 Greek Catholic Hospital 02327275 Ibn Sina Hospital 09986732 Al Hilana Modern Hospital 09989994 Princess Barwa Hospital 02327555 Greek Catholic Hospital 02327275 Ibn Al Nafies Hospital 023247104 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital 03314111 21:00 Athens, Larnaca (RU) 21:00 Paris (RU)	This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 0653300-5, where it should always be verified. ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 08:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RU) 08:00 Jeddah (add) (RU) 09:30 New Delhi (RU) 09:30 Agaba (RU) 10:30 Riyadh (RU) 11:00 Beirut (RU) 11:00 Colombo (RU) 11:30 Frankfurt (RU) 12:45 Jeddah (add) (RU) 13:45 New York, Amsterdam (RU) 16:40 Istanbul (RU) 19:15 Bangkok, Calcutta (RU) 19:30 London, Berlin (RU) 19:30 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RU) 19:45 Casa Blanca, Tunis (RU) 21:00 Rome (RU) 21:00 Athens, Larnaca (RU) 21:00 Paris (RU)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 Sanaa (LY)
11:40 Sharjah (AA)
14:00 Riyadh (SU)
17:45 Dubai (EM)
21:05 Cairo (MS)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)
02:30 Istanbul (TK)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:00 Beirut (RU)
08:00 Agaba (RU)
11:45 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RU)
12:00 Rome (RU)
12:15 Montreal, Toronto (RU)
12:20 Amsterdam, Chicago (RU)
12:30 Larnaca, Athens (RU)
12:50 Jeddah (RU)
13:15 London (RU)
17:30 Frankfurt (RU)
18:00 Cairo (RU)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RU)
22:30 Dubai, Muscat (RU)
22:45 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RU)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)
09:15 Beirut (ME)
12:30 Algiers (AA)
12:30 Sanaa (LY)
15:30 Riyadh (SA)
18:45 Dubai (EM)
21:05 Cairo (MS)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:30 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 5:00 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 550/650
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 220/180
Carrot 350/270
Cauliflower 350/250
Cucumbers (large) 150/100
Cucumbers (small) 300/200
Eggplant 300/200
Garlic 600/400
Green beans 500/400
Lemon 220/150
Marrow (large) 200/140
Marrow (small) 200/140
Onion 240/140
Orange 300/200
Onion (dry) 150/100
Pepper (hot) 480/320
Pepper (sweet) 300/200
Potato 450/350
Tomato 300/200
String beans 650/500
Watermelon 300/200
Vine Leaves 650/450

New Karak hospital nears completion

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nearly 80 per cent of construction work at the Italian government-financed hospital in Karak has been finished, and total completion is expected by the end of 1994, according to Health Department Director in Karak Abdullah Shawarrah.

Dr. Shawarrah told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Health Ministry hopes the hospital will be operational by the beginning of the second half of 1995, after all the equipment and facilities have been installed. The first phase of the JD 13 million project will make available 100 beds; later the hospital could be expanded to accommodate 200 beds, sufficient for the Karak Governorate's needs until the end of the century, said Dr. Shawarrah.

The infrastructure work, which cost JD 1 million, was provided by the Jordanian government in accordance with an agreement with the

Italian government which is financing the construction and the equipment, added Dr. Shawarrah.

Jordan and Italy signed an agreement for the construction of the hospital in 1988, but because of unforeseen difficulties and the delay in the infrastructure work, construction of the hospital started only in September 1993.

Dr. Shawarrah said the agreement also provided for training Jordanian doctors at Italian hospitals, a programme that is currently in progress.

Following the construction of the hospital, he said, the Health Ministry plans to set up a school adjacent to the hospital for on-the-job training of doctors and nurses in a bid to upgrade medical services on a constant basis.

According to Health Ministry sources, Jordan provided the plot of land and laid the civil works for the hospital which included a sewerage system, electricity, water and telephone networks, roads and other relevant services.

Heat wave wilts 'Eid holiday

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan went on holiday for a week for a break well earned, according to a handful of the Kingdom's working community. The past few months have been exhausting for many in the country: deputies fought to endorse the draft sales tax law, the government fought for its survival, Palestinians fought each other over their different positions vis-à-vis the peace process.

Finally, 'Eid Al Adha arrived accompanied by an unwelcome guest: an unbearable heat wave. Nevertheless, most people were determined to enjoy their free time and nothing could stop them.

"I took my family to Jerash where we had a picnic under the cool shade of the trees," said Mustafa, a garage owner from Sweileh.

While Mustafa was picnicking in Jerash, some more fortunate Jordanians were basking on Mediterranean beaches, yet complaining about the scorching temperatures. "Cyprus would have been

more fun had it not been so hot," complained Rana, a university student who spent the holidays under the Cypriot sun.

Seventy-three-year-old Abu Ahmad, who sold cooked corn from his street-side cart in Jabal Hussein said that this 'Eid was less rewarding than the last one.

"People preferred to nibble on something that would cool them off, mostly ice-cream. I did manage to sell some corn cobs at night when it was cooler, but all in all, it was much worse than last 'Eid," he said, thanking God Almighty for his bliss.

In Jabal Hussein, a young man selling fresh hommas muttered something under his breath angrily. Asked why he was upset, Ghazi answered that "those fancy car owners" try to humiliate simple people like himself. "I am simply selling this stuff, I am not asking for charity," he said explaining that some people stop their cars to buy his produce and try to give him more money than it is worth, "as if I am a beggar," he said.

"This 'Eid was emotionally

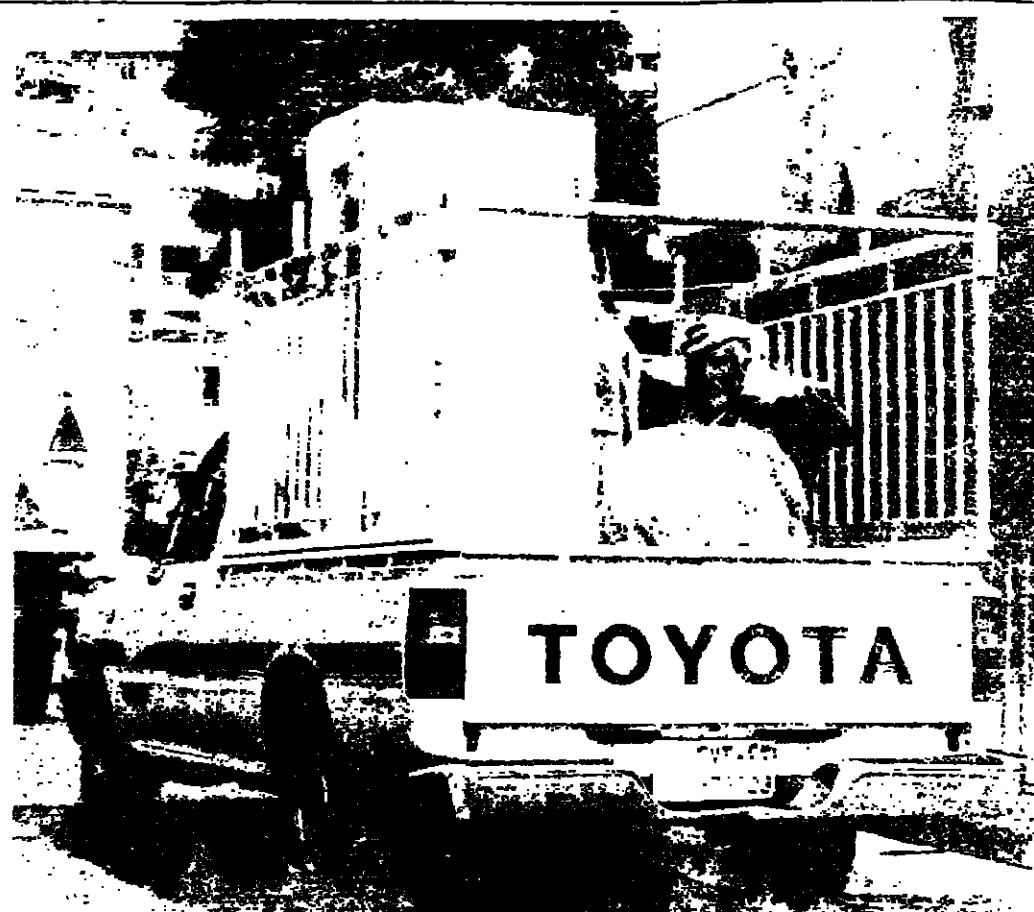
charged," said a PLO official. He said that for the first time in 27 years, Palestinians were hoping to celebrate 'Eid Al Adha in Gaza and Jericho with a sense of freedom, but were prevented from doing so.

"How can our people feel free to celebrate with the ongoing bloody confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis?" he said.

Heat is no heat, Amman's streets were especially crowded at night; most people preferred to go for walks at night after a busy day of visiting family and friends. Traffic was heavily congested as families drove around the streets of the capital before ending another day of celebration.

But despite the holiday many Jordanians expressed a sense of restlessness.

"Even when we are not working, our minds are not at rest," said Rana, a super market owner in Sweileh adding that feeding a family of eight was no easy task. "I spend my nights and days thinking about how I am going to secure a decent living for my wife and children," he said.



An Amman citizen seemed to know what was in store for this year's 'Eid Al Adha, as he watches over his fattened up sheep and his newly-

purchased refrigerator. Temperature soared 34°C during the holiday night in Amman.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cables

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday received cables of good wishes on Jordan's 48th independence anniversary from Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, senior government officials and high ranking army officers. The King also received cables from heads of departments, professional union officials and various private and public organisations in Jordan. In addition, King Hussein received cables of good wishes from heads of state of Arab and foreign nations.

Qatar Airways to start Amman-Doha route

AMMAN (J.T.) — Qatar Airways, the national Qatari airline, will launch its direct Amman-Doha route Friday, May 27, in accordance with a recent agreement signed between the civil aviation authorities in Jordan and Qatar. The Qatari airline, which launched its inaugural flights aboard Air Bus Industrie aircraft last January, has already established permanent routes through out the Gulf states and plans to open routes to Damascus, Beirut, Cairo and Khartoum.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

★ Film entitled "The Candidate" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. (110 minutes).

FIELD TRIP

★ Field trip to Al Koura region, some 80 kilometres to the north of Amman, organised by the Friends of Archaeology. Departure will be on Friday from the Amra Hotel parking lot at 9:00 a.m. by bus or private car.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by 20 Jordanian and Iraqi artists (including Widad Orfali, Hussein Da'feh, Waddah Al Ward, Adnan Al Hilu and Mahmoud Hussein) at Orfali Art Gallery in Umm Uthaina (Tel. 826932).

★ Exhibition by 46 artists entitled "He, Bonjour Monsieur La Fontaine" at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Itab Hreih and another exhibition of ceramics by Sajida Al Mashalki at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (Tel. 644451, 652823).

★ Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Toumi at Baladna Art Gallery (Tel. 687598).

★ Art exhibition by five Egyptian artists at Darat Al Founun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 56 Arab contemporary artists (Tel. 643251/2).

Government plans to introduce draft law requiring pre-marriage blood tests

By Elia Nasrallah
and Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government intends to introduce a draft law soon requiring couples planning to marry to take blood tests before their nuptials to determine if either partner suffers from any blood disease and other genetic problem that could result in their children being born with congenital malformation or retardation, Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas announced recently.

"It is not a measure designed to prevent people from getting married, but rather a measure to alert people to the possibilities of bearing children with congenital defects and also to the dangers of contracting sexually transmitted diseases," said Dr. Malhas.

According to sociologist Sabri Rbeihat, in Jordanian society, where intermarriages between relatives are not uncommon, the government has recognised the need to inform the public of the potential risks to the offspring of such couples.

"The concept of traditional intermarriage is deeply rooted in the Jordanian society, and it is commonplace for social and economic reasons," Dr. Rbeihat said.

He told the Jordan Times that this type of marriage in Jordan is similar to other Arab societies and aims at maintaining solidarity, minimising costs, and most important, preserving the family's real estate and properties.

"In Jordan, only the affluent could marry outsiders as their social status and wealth make their marriage both possible and rational," he said.

According to Dr. Malhas, no proper survey has been conducted in the Kingdom to determine the causes of congenital malformation or retardation. The minister cited intermarriage and blood diseases as two major factors that could result in the delivery of disabled children.

A recent study conducted by the Ministry of Health released in April, revealed that at least 750 individuals suffer from the thalassemia, a hereditary disease which causes deficiency in hemoglobin.

"This disease, along with many other blood diseases, if detected by a blood test, would prevent future disappointments," the health minister said.

Other important communicable diseases that could be detected by the proposed blood tests are sexually transmitted diseases and the AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) virus. According to a Ministry of Health report on Dec. 1, 1993, Jordan has 35 reported cases of AIDS.

Dr. Malhas said surveys were conducted in Lebanon and in Europe with results confirming that intermarriages among close relatives constitute one of the main factors of children born with birth defects.

Reuters reported Friday that Lebanon passed a law requiring couples to take pre-marriage blood tests. The law stipulates that if couples marry without taking the tests, they will be fined.

Dr. Malhas called on the public to comprehend that at least 10 per cent of Jordan's population currently suffers

from some type of disability, adding that many such disabilities could be prevented by stopping the practice of intermarriage and, in cases where the tests find a communicable disease in either partner, undergoing proper medical treatments to rid the person of the disease prior to marriage.

Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sqour welcomed the health ministry's plan, adding that his own ministry plans to conduct awareness campaigns to explain the advantages of undergoing the blood tests.

"The ministry has experienced some cases in the past in which parents of handicapped children have said that they would have taken a different course had they known that their child would be born disabled and they could have prevented that from the beginning," Dr. Sqour told the Jordan Times.

He added that these tests are important because in many cases not only the first child would be disabled, but his or her siblings as well.

"In the initial stages, tests do not completely prevent intermarriages, at least it is a start, and we would be happy to have a 10 per cent reduction in disabilities at early stages," the minister added.

The Ministry of Health also enlisted the help and approval of the Office of the Chief Islamic Justice in Amman concerning regulations before going ahead with the move, Dr. Malhas said, adding that a final agreement has not yet been reached.

Couples planning to marry will be required to obtain a certificate showing the results of the blood tests from the Ministry of Health. The certificate will determine what kind of birth defects (physical and mental) the offspring of the couple might be born with, and any other blood diseases either partner might have, Dr. Malhas said.

According to Dr. Rbeihat, "what we need to do is to make people aware of the reality and facts, and for them to understand the outcomes and to encourage them to undergo the blood tests."

Israeli warplanes attack

(Continued from page 1)

patrol detected movement, said a U.N. officer in the area.

A tank fired two cannon rounds, killing Mansour, said the officer of the Finnish battalion of the U.N. Truce Force in Lebanon (UNTF). He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Talibeh, about 6 kilometres west of Israel's northern Galilee panhandle, is policed by UNFIL's Finnish battalion. The village sits on the edge of the eastern sector of an enclave Israel occupies in southern Lebanon as a "security zone" to shield its northern towns from cross-border guerrilla attacks.

Around the market town of Nabatiyeh just south of Iqlim Al Tuffah and north of Taibeh, Israeli troops fired incendiary shells at corn fields and olive groves starting fires.

The Israelis apparently wanted to clear a bush near their outposts which could be used by guerrillas to infiltrate into the security zone.

A firefighter was wounded by shrapnel as he battled a blaze at the abandoned Lebanese army barracks out-

side Nabatiyeh.

Shiite guerrilla leader Mustafa Dirani was seized by helicopter-borne Israeli commandos from his house in the eastern Bekaa valley.

Israeli officials said they wanted Mr. Dirani for interrogation on the fate of Israeli airman Ron Arad, who has been missing since his plane was shot down over south Lebanon in October 1986.

Syria on Wednesday denounced the "terrorist abduction" of Mr. Dirani and indicated the kidnapping could hurt the Middle East peace process.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa urged the United States and Russia, co-sponsors of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, to condemn the weekend Israeli commando operation in eastern Lebanon.

It was the first official Syrian comment on the raid.

Mr. Sharaa, during a meeting with Russian presidential envoy Viktor Potanin, demanded that Russia and the United States "condemn Israel's arrogant policies and stands, especially the latest terrorist abduction carried out by Israel inside Lebanese territory," said SANA.

suspected killers of a foreign envoy to take place in Beirut with full publicity and press coverage since the civil war.

In Wednesday's hearing, the court rejected a defence plea that it was not competent to try the case, ruling that it was because the killing of Mr. Mayteb was a threat to Lebanon's security.

The defence claimed most of the prosecution evidence was obtained by torture and demanded that it be disallowed. The prosecution denied the allegation.

The court adjourned until May 30.

Sanaa eases offensive

(Continued from page 1)

political dialogue" as the war was about to enter its fourth week.

He said the United States was "very concerned by the situation in Yemen."

Northern and southern forces have been at war for three weeks but the northern forces have failed to fulfil their original hopes of a quick and easy victory.

They have pushed the southerners back into an incomplete semicircle around Aden with a radius of between 30 and 60 kilometres but in the past week they have not made much more progress towards the city.

The northern army is also moving east towards the southern-controlled provinces of Hadramaw and Mahrah, which they cut off from the Aden enclave early in the fighting.

About 500 northerners have been killed and 1,700 wounded since the war began, a source close to the government said.

Mr. Iryani said the main contact in the negotiations with the southerners was Salem Saleh Mohammad, one of the YSP's representatives on a presidential council which nominally ruled Yemen until Mr. Beidh announced last week that the south was going its own way.

Mr. Beidh named Salem Saleh as a member of his own breakaway presidential council based in Aden but the politician, who is now in London, has not said whether he accepts the post or not.

"He was asked to come to Aden and he refused," Mr. Iryani said.

Mr. Iryani, who is very close to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, said the talks between Sanaa and YSP moderates had made progress on some points.

"At one stage they said they were willing to suspend the

(secessionist) actions they declared... What's important is that they are ready to negotiate in the framework of unity," he said.

But Sanaa was unsure what authority the moderates have to talk and continued to see Mr. Beidh and 15 other YSP leaders as criminals who should either face trial or flee the country.

"I don't know if they are talking personally or with the backing of the YSP politburo," he said.

He said the purpose of pardoning all secessionists except Mr. Beidh and the 15 was to answer objections that by punishing them victorious northerners would create long-term antagonism in some southern areas.

Sanaa announced the amnesty on Monday evening and twinned it with arrest warrants against the 16 for rebellion, mutiny, violating the constitution and other serious crimes.

"If it leads to the YSP splitting then well and good. But it was not aimed at that," Mr. Iryani said.

The south said on Saturday it was ending the 1990 union of traditionalist north Yemen and formerly Marxist south Yemen.

Mr. Iryani said the main military obstacle to an advance on Aden was that southern forces still controlled parts of Lahj Province northeast of the city.

"The effort right now is to eliminate remnants of the opposition there. You can't enter Aden before Lahj is totally safe. It would be extremely dangerous," he said.

The next military step would be to break the defences around Aden and neutralise Aden airport, which the south's superior air force is using to harass the advancing northerners.

"When our long-range artillery arrives in Abyan (northeast of Aden) we will stop

using missiles against Aden airport because the artillery is more accurate," Mr. Iryani said.

A northern missile apparently aimed at the airport hit a house nearby early on Sunday, killing eight people.

On the eastern front, the main obstacle was the distance; and the strain this put on northern army supply lines, he said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of mourners Wednesday thronged the funeral of victims of a rocket attack on the northern Yemeni capital, vowing to fight on until the southern separatists are defeated.

The funeral was for nine of the 13 people who died when a missile crashed on a block of mud-and-stone houses in Sanaa Monday night. Four were buried in private ceremonies.

Men in traditional robes and kaffiyehs raised the dead high above their heads as the procession flowed toward the Khuzeni cemetery in the centre of the capital. The bodies were carried on ambulance stretchers, including one so tiny it fit in two hands.

"This criminal massacre will not stop the people," said Hussein Al Sayaghy. "Quite the opposite, it will increase their determination to clean the Yemeni land from the ugly and criminal dirty bodies" of the secessionist southern leadership.

"We will fight and fight and fight until we gain our freedom," added Mr. Sayaghy, a government-employed aeronautical engineer.

But an Yemeni minister vowed Tuesday that the north would not attack Aden with Scud surface-to-surface missiles to avenge the attack on Sanaa.

"I assure you that this will not happen," Mr. Iryani told reporters.

Mr. Iryani acknowledged that the north had fired three missiles with a shorter range than the Scuds.

PROJECT MANAGER

BANK SETTLEMENT PLAN - JORDAN

The airlines operating in Jordan including Royal Jordanian are completing a feasibility study to implement the BSP in Jordan. A scheme to organise the remittances of Travel Agency ticket sales to the airlines, through a clearing bank.

Initially the post will be daily part time (half day) pending the approval of the feasibility study towards the end of 1994. Thereafter, and subject to confirmation by the BSP Steering Panel, the post will be confirmed as full time.

Candidates applying to this post should have the following:

1. A minimum of 15 years experience in airline sales and marketing, finance or travel agency automation, 10 years of which must be in the Jordan market.
2. Attended relevant IATA Sales and Ticketing courses.
3. Adequate knowledge of IATA Agency Procedures and Resolutions and BSP procedures.
4. Knowledge of airline ticketing and/or travel agency accounting procedures and ability to review computerised reports.
5. Excellent command of the English language both written and spoken.
6. Good relations with the airlines and travel agents in Jordan.
7. A high personal reputation and standing and smart physical appearance.

Details of salaries and benefits will be provided after the initial selection process.

Written applications including curriculum vitae and references should be received by June 9 to the following address:

Chairman BSP Feasibility Study Panel
c/o Information Systems & Services Dept.
P.O.Box 392
Amman - Jordan

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Challenge before commission

THE 17TH session of the ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), due to start in Amman on May 29, offers a rare occasion for making a fresh appraisal of the relevance and sense of direction of this U.N. regional body. ESCWA has been around for several years attempting to serve the economic and social needs of 13 countries situated in the Middle East. But by and large, the contributions of this potentially effective regional organisation have yet to withstand the test of time.

Some interested parties contend that the greater portion of the organisation's annual budget goes to cover either bureaucratic expenses or academic studies that do not seem to figure high on the agenda of the area's governments. How to change ESCWA from a talking or studying machine into an action-oriented institution must surely be uppermost on the minds of the ministers who will take part in the forthcoming deliberations.

Part of the problem of ESCWA is the lack of cooperation and coordination between the member states themselves. There seems to be no way to isolate economic coordination from political cooperation; and this issue, which has plagued other regional organisations, including the Arab Cooperation Council, obviously frustrates the course of ESCWA as well.

There are of course other challenges facing ESCWA which we hope could be addressed in the course of the two-day conference. The linkage between economic development on one hand and human rights and democracy on the other does not seem to have room on the list of priorities of the U.N. body. Unlike the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which has finally accepted the organic relationship between economic progress and pluralistic democracy, ESCWA has yet to yield to this logic in pursuit of its economic and social goals for the region. We believe that there is already international consensus on this point as evidenced by the deliberations and conclusions of last year's World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna. The United Nations General Assembly had endorsed the recommendations of the Vienna conference on human rights, and therefore there is every reason for ESCWA to apply this new perspective and start working also on the development of democracy in the region as an integral part of the chain of development. The least that the peoples of this region can expect in this context is to have ESCWA service, in addition to its formal responsibilities, the functions of the U.N. Centre of Human Rights till the centre is able to have its own regional office.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IBRAHIM AL Absi, a columnist in *Al Ra'i*, criticised the Arab League for failing to rally to end the conflict in Yemen and for showing little interest in what is happening there between the northeners and the southeners, with detrimental consequences on the Arab potentials. The Arab League is silent about the continued sanctions against Libya and Iraq and Western hostile attitudes towards Sudan and the Palestinians, said the writer. Similarly, the Arab League stood arm folded during the civil war in Lebanon and the foreign intervention in Somalia, and has showed no concern at all about Israel's abduction of Mustafa Dirani, head of a Lebanese resistance group, said the writer. It is the deep differences and conflicting views among Arab states, which rendered this institution impotent, said Mr. Absi. He said under the present circumstances, one can conclude that there is no need at all for an Arab League which, though set up to bring prosperity to the Arab World, is serving as a catalyst for further splits among Arab states.

TAHER AL Adwan, a columnist in *Al Dostour*, attacked Israel's abduction of Mustafa Dirani, as another act of military piracy that can only engender deep hatred and frustration among the Arab masses. It is a state terrorism act that does not attract any world condemnation, which underlines the fact that the world community continues to do service to Israel and its interests, said the writer. There is no doubt, said the writer, that the Israeli act was politically motivated and is connected with the peace process but was carried out under the pretext of seeking the release of the Israeli pilot whose plane was shot down over Lebanon in 1986. Perhaps the military aggression was aimed at boosting the popularity of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the face of the extreme Israeli rightist groups' opposition to his moves along the Palestinian track, said the writer. Also Mr. Rabin could have aimed at sending a clear message to the Syrians reminding them of the Israeli military might in a bid to pressure Damascus into accepting the Jewish state's conditions at the negotiating table, added the writer.

The View from Academia

The traffic situation: What police can and cannot do?

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

THERE IS no doubt that the traffic administration's overall performance has improved quite noticeably over the years, especially in the past decade. Its personnel have become not only more reliable but also more efficient, with respect to both their office and field tasks. In the case of a road accident, for example, they arrive on the scene speedily, assess the case intelligently, and execute the paper work (despite the obvious need for computerised processing) fairly smoothly and quickly. Whenever a traffic light breaks down, a policeman shows up at the sight promptly and ably takes over, directing the heavy flow of traffic firmly, precisely and diligently. Indeed the very character of the traffic policeman, which mirrors the character of the police department at large, has undergone a significant change; on the whole, he has become extremely dependable, courteous, and humane. This (among other things) we highly appreciate.

Furthermore, the alarming increase in the number of road accidents throughout the Kingdom, many of which are either tragically fatal (wasting precious human life) or annoyingly damaging (consuming a great deal of valuable time, effort, and money) ought not to overshadow the commendable work or progress being made by the said administration. Most such accidents are to be blamed more on our society, our present-day culture, and our own citizen, than on the police department. This we say in all fairness.

Who but the drunken driver himself is to blame for the damage he causes while driving under the influence of alcohol? Who do we blame but the teenager himself, or his irresponsible parents, for reckless driving? Ought not parents make sure that their kids are responsible enough before they buy them a car or let them use or steal theirs? As statistics indicate, the vast majority of accidents are committed, in addition to the two reasons just mentioned, as a result of obnoxiousness (people are simply rude), ignorance (or even total absence) of street ethics, disregard and disrespect for the life and property of others, foolish underestimation of danger, show off, moral laxness, lack of understanding of technology and machinery (these are still relatively new to our society) and of course traffic literacy. With the exception of the latter, all are diseases inherited from our social environment. Let's be frank.

What could the traffic department do? Ultimately, very little. The ball is first and foremost (I am arguing) in the citizen's court. We cannot have a policeman sitting next to each and every motorist in this country watching how he/she drives. My own mind is a policeman, and so is my own conscience. I say this with a lot of bitterness, knowing that my society, willingly or inadvertently, has decided to put its own mind and its own conscience in a freezer. And so naturally, there will continue to be (as an inevitable outcome to this "mindless," "heartless" motorist) more casualties, more deaths, more damage, more loss, and more accidents. The situation is outrageous. Let's remember that the driver's licence is given on the basis (and it can only be given on this

basis) of mechanical skill not moral competence, and let's remember that the written test can measure, in the best of circumstances, only a small amount of traffic knowledge. This means that many people who are morally corrupt and road illiterate can obtain the licence fairly easily. This is the way it is.

And yet, the little the traffic administration can do may make a big difference, the difference between life and death or happiness and misery, if we take the traffic business more seriously and apply the crucial rules (though not necessarily all rules) more wisely, firmly, consistently, and rigorously. After all, does not the traffic department assert that among many of its noble aims is "the prevention of road accidents"? In other words, its role in this particular respect is, though admittedly secondary, quite vital.

Of course, the traffic administration is doing a good job regarding the said matter. The periodic inspection of vehicles, especially prior to and during the winter season (albeit conducted somewhat arbitrarily and haphazardly) is crucial. Many of our careless motorists may not care if the headlights are functioning or if the handbrake is loose. The annual inspection also plays its share in preventing potential tragedies. Additionally, I have even come to understand and appreciate the random, impromptu stopping of vehicles on major and minor roads in and off city limits (which used to annoy me tremendously) in order to check the validity of the driver's licence. The other day I was at a police station in Amman for a total of fifteen minutes. It was night time. In front of the station, a traffic policeman was stopping vehicles and checking licences. During the brief amount of time I was there, he arrested a drunken driver, a driver who did not have a licence, and a motorist who had in the seat next to him a gun for which he had no permit. Until that night the impromptu stopping of vehicles did not make sense to me; now it does.

I am sure that the traffic department is doing a lot more than I have mentioned. However, I wish to seize this opportunity to suggest the following two humble points which, I believe, can improve the traffic situation in the country quite dramatically, if taken seriously into account.

The traffic police need to play a more effective "advisory," "directional," and "instructive" role than they are doing at present. The job of the policeman is not to ticket or reprimand violators. Rather, it is first to teach and instruct. The image, in the mind of many people in our society of a traffic policeman is still that of an authority figure who is there to scare or punish. I believe that such an image needs to be changed. We want our traffic police to enlighten and guide. I do not (simply) mean that the various police departments ought to educate the citizen about traffic rules. Not exactly, for of course they are already doing this. In coordination with the media, they are spreading important information about safe motoring, information which is undeniably essential.

What I have in mind, however, is something that is slightly different and certainly more difficult to implement, though not

impossible. The idea I am proposing is for the police to help translate the various traffic lessons into daily practice and daily habits. For example, if we want our drivers to respect the stop sign, it is not enough to explain its meaning and to demonstrate in theory how to obey it. What we wish instead is for the motorist to practice it in his/her actual daily trips. If after we preach about the stop sign on the radio and TV we put a policeman next to a stop sign to make people observe it every time they come to it, for say a couple of months, stopping at a stop sign then becomes a habit. The procedure is simple. Let's begin from the start with a grace period in which people who do not stop at the sign are stopped by the policeman and asked to go back, come to a full stop in front of it, then proceed. If we do this long enough, the idea sinks in and becomes behaviour. I am not saying that we ought to have a policeman stand next to every stop sign. No. What I am saying is that we can select key stop signs in the cities and have policemen stand next to them for a specific period of time, whatever we agree is enough. Only after we do this, we ought to begin ticketing violators. We can do the same, either simultaneously or consecutively, with the rest of the traffic rules.

With regard to traffic punitive acts, I agree wholeheartedly with the traffic administration's undeclared policy that one ought not to punish violators all the time, and not to be too strict and ruthless. There has to be a degree of mercy and forgiveness. This I truly admire. It is not a good idea to pressure motorists and be indiscriminate. As applied, our traffic laws are for the most part both benign and humane, and this is a good idea.

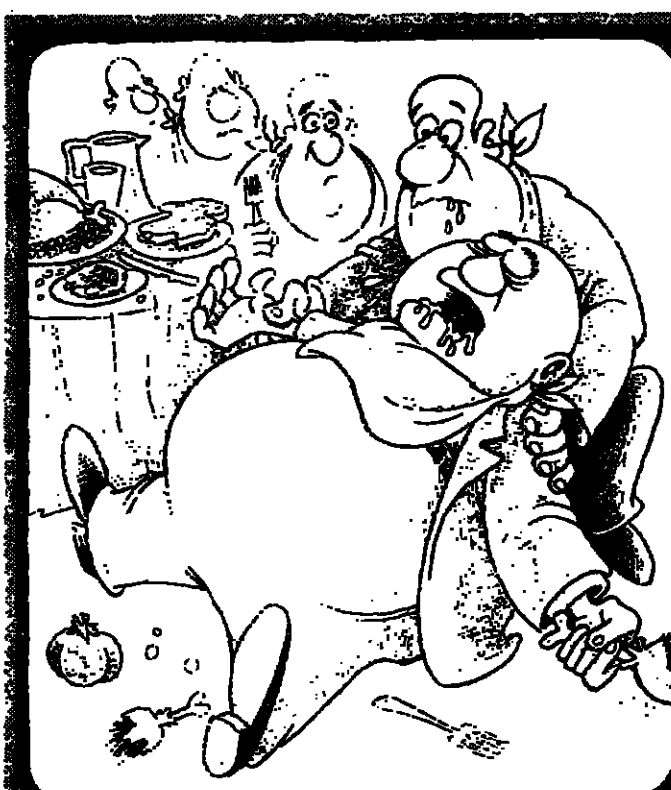
However, two points need to be stressed here. First, random or seasonal punishment is a bad practice. We ought to be consistent in enforcing the law. Secondly, to go to the extreme and be lax with the law is also equally objectionable.

The best approach to the application of the law is to distinguish between serious violations (and enforce the law strictly, consistently, and uncompromisingly with respect to them) and innocent violations (here one can be merciful and forgiving). A good policeman can tell the difference between the former and the latter. For example, if the speed limit is 80 kms on a spacious well-built highway and I cruise at 90 kms, this is not a serious violation. But if I am caught driving at 130 kms, this is reckless. Also, if my car skids on a snowy day and I hit the car in front of me and break a light, this is not serious. But if I am drunk and crash into a car and damage it seriously, I should be put behind bars. I am committing a crime. It is a big mistake to be forgiving with respect to serious violations (I know of a few cases where we have been unwisely merciful with drunken drivers, dangerous speeders, and cowboy motorists). The irony is that the police are often firm where they ought to be merciful, and vice versa. Our streets will be a lot safer if policeman play a more visible instructional role, and if they ticket discriminately.

By Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

A Marshall plan for culture, development

Jointly established by UNESCO and the United Nations at the end of 1992, the World Commission on Culture and Development or the Pérez de Cuéllar Commission — named after its chairman, the former U.N. secretary-general — is an independent body composed of leading figures, including four Nobel Prize winners and a former head of state. The mission is to prepare the first world report ever dedicated to the links between culture and development. Three meetings were already held by the commission to that end: the first one in Paris, the second in Stockholm (Sweden) and the most recent one in San José (Costa Rica), where its members studied the preliminary draft outline of the report. This undertaking has already drawn strong support from the international community. In the article that follows, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar describes his vision of the links between culture and development.



tional solidarity, should at last do so.

Combating indigence and poverty is, of course, the first priority. The Human Development Report, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), stresses that almost 83 per cent of the world's income is today in the hands of the 20 per cent of the wealthiest population. For the 20 per cent of the poorest population, there remains 1.4 per cent of the world's income. In the 1960s, the share of the richest population was 70 per cent and that of the poorest 2.3 per cent. An abyss of this kind cannot be filled, and the exclusion which, in North and South alike, is dividing our societies into two cannot be overcome just by injecting capital, infrastructure, technology or expertise. Ready-made, turn-key happiness has been a failure. Today, less than 10 per cent of the world's population plays a full part in political, economic, social and cultural life.

Our commission must therefore set itself three aims, closely connected with each other. These are to promote new patterns of de-

velopment linked with new cultural policies; to promote cultural diversity; and to promote a new cultural dynamic for social change. We are convinced that far from being a mere legacy, culture, today under threat, is the only horizon that we have in common. We can no longer ignore it: our patterns of development based on the continuous expansion of material consumption are neither viable nor infinitely extensible. They not only tear the fabric of cultures but they threaten the biosphere and hence the survival of humanity.

The transition to sustainable development implies a radical change in the styles of development in North and South alike. It cannot succeed unless new patterns of development and new cultural policies come to the fore that follow plural trajectories, do not endanger biodiversity, are rooted in cultural diversity and are based on the achievements of science and modern technology. In future, development patterns must therefore be focused on people and foster the development of cultural values instead of harming them. Where both the natural and

the cultural environments are concerned, the problem today is not so much one of establishing control as of setting limits to it.

The conclusion of a genuine social and moral contract and even of the "natural contract" outlined at Rio calls for a new pact among human beings — a cultural contract. If we really want to prepare for the 21st century, if we want to give a chance to the kind of sustainable human development based on solidarity to which I have referred, we shall have to change our behaviour radically, and change it soon. We are going to have to recreate a common fund of shared values, with due regard for our separate identities.

Some will say that this is a pipe-dream. My answer to this is that the most important social and historical transformation of our time, along with decolonisation, has undoubtedly been the change in the situation of women and their role in society. Nevertheless, this cultural revolution, which is nowhere near completion, was not in the manifestos of any of the political parties. It has forced itself upon them. This

upheaval has come about collectively, anonymously and in the course of everyday life. It has been and will be brought about by women themselves, and this is also true of the current demographic transition.

The cards of the 21st century are being shuffled before our eyes. Suffice it to mention the scientific and technological revolution, the irruption of the worldwide communication society, the globalisation of the economy, the political upheavals and the cross currents of global integration. Our universe is fraught with perils and uncertainties, and yet rich in new potential.

The technological and economic revolution is thus challenging one of the cornerstones of industrial society — labour. The massive use of information technologies and the rise in productivity that are features of contemporary societies foreshadow unprecedented upheavals, which call for a radical review of traditional development, cultural, educational and training policies. The economic growth without creation of jobs, an universal phe-

nomenon which was underlined by the UNDP, represents one of its most worrisome aspects. Started about 20 years ago and expanding ever since, it does not affect only the North, but also the South, which is already hardly hit by cultural exclusion, dualism, unemployment and marginalisation.

At a time of increasingly acute intercultural conflicts and expanding political freedoms, peace and democracy constitute another global challenge. The culture of peace, democracy and human rights constitutes an entity that is clearly indivisible, just like civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. The reason why democracy is becoming a central issue today is that only through democratic dialogue can original and varied combinations come about between modernity and cultures, culminating in new development models and new cultural policies. To achieve this, we must pool, and also reappropriate, the wide range of cultural experiences and itineraries through open political debate. For culture is also a way of enabling everyone to make a personal choice, to reject any form of subservience, and to prefer reflection to reflexes.

A bridge must be built between the visionary and the decision-maker, between seeing and foreseeing, between creators and economists. This will enable us to lay the foundations of an agenda for culture and development that will be complementary to the Agenda 21, adopted in Rio. Such an agenda, included in our report, will comprise not only the concrete programmatic and a practical plan of action provided for in our mandate, but also reform proposals and recommendations on arrangements for follow-up, financing and implementation.

To this purpose, our commission has associated with its work, in a logic of dialogue, all the parties concerned: leading figures, creative artists, intellectuals, development experts. It needs, however, the support of all, since its work is financed — like the work of the Brundtland, Brandt or the South Commissions — by voluntary financial contributions.

As André Malraux said, the world of culture "is not one of immortality; it is one of metamorphosis." Far from being an obstacle to modernisation, culture is the key to development and its horizon — since development encompasses all the wealth of human experience. Emerson once said: "Hitch your wagon to a star".

The writer is former U.N. secretary-general and president of the World Commission on Culture and Development.

مكتبة من الكتب

Autobiography Of A Young Film Critic — a rich material for analysts

By Mohammad Mashariqa

A NEWLY published book entitled *Autobiography of A Young Film Critic* is expected to trigger a wide-scale controversy within the literary and artistic community in Jordan, as well as among historians and sociologists. The book, by Hassan Abu Ghanimeh, is a mixture of autobiography blended with contemporary literature.

Critics might differ over the artistic and scientific value of the book and the way it tells events and portrays characters and factual personalities. The book could be considered as a record of the memories of Jordan's urban society and the elements that had their impact on Jordan's social, cultural, political and artistic life.

Through this daring approach, Abu Ghanimeh, a long time film critic and editor of Al Ra'i Arabic daily's arts page, could become model for other Jordanian intellectuals to encourage them in turn to write their own autobiographies from a cultural and social perspective.

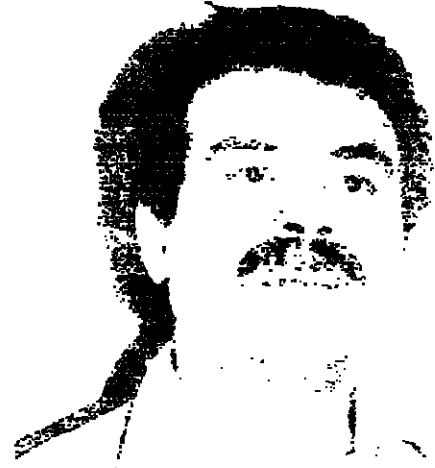
AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

This is one way that enables writers and researchers to delve into and present a description of the development of the contemporary Jordanian society and its future prospects.

So far Jordan's modern history has only been recorded within the framework of political developments that revolved around the founding of the Emirate, and later the Kingdom, of Jordan or the framework of the anthropological study of the "micro-society" in the country.

The "elite civic society" of Jordan enjoyed recognition only in the light of the services offered to the people and state by its prominent members. But the majority of the civic society has no recorded history, probably for political reasons, or because it had been opposed to the regime.

On the other hand, the bedouin society and its traditions and customs have been the subject of anthropological research on the part of scholars, sociologists or folklore enthusiasts. As to the Palestinian social sectors within the Jordanian society, they have acquired the attention of Palestinian intellectuals whose main study centred around the Palestinian people's struggle for survival and for safeguarding their national identity.



Hassan Abu Ghanimeh

As to the other sectors which are also components of the Jordanian society, like the Syrians and the Circassians, they were mentioned in Jordan's social history as mere cultural or folkloric elements or symbols of tradesmen or artisans.

In his book, Abu Ghanimeh presented an image of the civic life in northern Jordan citing Al Tal and Abu Ghanimeh families as examples, pointing out the different services provided by members of these two families to the state at the political, cultural and administrative levels and also as educators over a long period of time dating back to the earlier years of the present century.

Abu Ghanimeh projects the role of his own family in the "Irbid government" led by Ali Khalqi Ali Sharaireh before Prince Abdullah's arrival in Maan (in southern Jordan).

The book details in particular the period from 1952-65 — a period most affected by the political and ideological ideas that have had their impact on the middle class in the country.

Abu Ghanimeh was keen on pinpointing the struggle and the controversy that was rife within the class whose members were divided over their support for Egyptian leader Jamal Abdul Nasser or their backing for King Hussein or King Saud.

The writer has also depicted inter-political parties' struggles, thus summing up the history of the political ideologies in Jordan. He writes about his admiration of King Hussein and the Hashemite family in general and his opposition to totalitarian regimes.

The writer's deep convictions seem to have been influenced by publications and books the United States Information Centre offered as gifts to Al Urubah School which the writer's father had founded in Irbid in the earlier years of the 1940s.

In a private interview, Abu Ghanimeh denied that the 15 or more years he had spent in Syria and Lebanon represented his own version of political opposition or political partisan affiliations. He says he spent these years researching work in the Palestinian media and cinema or Lebanese and Syrian press as a free progressive intellectual opposed to "imperialism" and its culture.

In his book, Abu Ghanimeh depicts also the social developments in Irbid as well as inter-marriages between people of Irbid and Syrian and Palestinian families, noting that local society was deeply influenced by Syrian culture and was deeply affected by or linked to the Palestinians and the Palestine issue.

The reader of this book becomes aware of the social openness in the Irbid society in the 1950s and the 1960s and the social tolerance and open-mindedness among the local communities. The book presents a picture of the co-existence among the various ethnic and religious groups.

But after 1965, the same society regrettably becomes rather conservative and far less tolerant.

Abu Ghanimeh was careful to monitor the status of women in society at that time, noting that women used to serve as teachers or workers going out with no head cover and sometimes sleeveless to attend social functions or to go to the movies which offered two-day-a-week shows solely for women.

The writer also depicts the life of domestic maids who, he says, were not isolated from the rest of the family as the situation is today, but acting as assistants to the housewives, living like other members of the family, and remaining there until they got married.

The writer also describes the condition of schools — both boys' schools and girls' schools — noting that traditions still did not tolerate co-education at the time.

Indeed, the book depicts life in a Jordanian city as a living cell with its people, donning their traditional outfits, costumes and garments, their children at play and the local community open to and influenced by the various cultural and political trends.

The book can rightfully be described as a genuine attempt towards departure from the traditional writings albeit rather journalistic in style and not delving deep into the psychology of the civic society. The book could appear to some readers as a record of clans and the Abu Ghanimeh and Tal family members and their social distinctions.

On the whole the book offers the social and cultural researcher a rich material for analysis.

Stronger British drug law faces many critics

By Paul Harris
Reuters

LONDON — Sixties rock stars were renowned for smoking it. American President Bill Clinton tried it and famously didn't inhale. But a new British drug law aims to crack down on the icon of hippy culture — cannabis.

An amendment to the criminal justice bill, currently before parliament and expected to become law in July, will increase the maximum fine for possessing the drug to £2,500 (\$3,700). The fivefold rise is the first for 17 years.

But the move against cannabis use has met unexpected opposition from police and magistrates, who will implement it.

"We don't think it will be particularly effective. There is a danger it could lead to more crime as users may commit crimes to pay for their fines," said Fran Edwards, spokeswoman for the Police Federation, which represents police in England and Wales.

Increasingly British police have simply

cautioned people possessing small amounts of drugs for personal use. In 1992, 51 per cent of drug offences were dealt with in this way, compared with two per cent in 1982 and the trend has been towards lenience.

Guidelines to magistrates suggest a fine of £180 (\$270) for possession against a present maximum of £500 (\$750). Rosemary Thomson, chairwoman of the Magistrates' Association, is dismissive of higher fines.

"It's utter rubbish, so far out of synch with the seriousness of the offence," she said.

"It is not on our agenda," said Ms. Thomson when asked if the new law would cause Magistrates' Association Guidelines on Fines to go up.

The attitude of the magistrates and police may make the increased fines pointless. Police will still caution most cases and magistrates will keep their old guidelines.

Ironically the drive to discourage the use of cannabis has instead opened a debate about its legalisation.

Mike Goodman, director of the drugs welfare charity release, said it had done people who want to legalise cannabis "a real favour".

"Most people involved in the field find cannabis non-problematic. It gets a clean bill of health compared to heavier drugs," he added.

Not everyone agrees. Conservative Member of Parliament Tim Rathbone, chairman of a Parliamentary Committee on Drug Abuse, told Reuters: "It is very dangerous for the people who use it. It can damage their brains and their bodies."

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug in Britain. A recent survey said that nearly a third of 14 and 15 year-olds had used it. Some experts call for the complete legalisation of all illicit substances.

Richard Stevenson, an economist at Liverpool University, wrote a paper called "winning the war on drugs — to legalise or not?"

Mr. Stevenson believes

that all drugs should be legalised, marketed and regulated so that they can be controlled.

"I am prepared to argue that drugs should be as legal as beer. They could be available from chemists clearly labelled and unquestionably with a government health warning," he said.

But easy availability could increase the number of users. The idea of buying heroin as easily as a bottle of wine angers Mr. Rathbone. He said that society's experience of alcohol abuse did not recommend making heroin equally obtainable.

"Ready availability has already made alcohol by far the greatest drug threat. More crimes are committed, more families are split and more work days lost through alcohol," he said.

Mr. Rathbone's views are shared by Steven Green, chairman of the Conservative Family Campaign, a Christian lobbying group.

Mr. Green does not see cannabis as harmless and believes users will move on to "harder" drugs like heroin and crack-cocaine.

Harassment case delivers telling blow to male office ribaldry

By Mariam Isa
Reuters

LONDON — The departure of three foreign exchange dealers from the U.S. investment bank Goldman Sachs for alleged harassment of a secretary shocked London's conservative financial district and renewed the debate over sexism.

Goldman Sachs — known for its policy of non-sexist staff conduct — said the three men, each reported to earn up to £1 million (\$1.5 million) a year, resigned.

Heated newspaper reports quoted insiders as saying they were forced out after hounding a secretary for sex in response to her innocent request about how to seek promotion.

Until the story broke in late April, action to punish sexual harassment or discrimination in the high-flying square mile known as the "city" — Britain's main financial centre — was virtually unknown.

Female traders are still rare and within the general ribaldry that has become the

city's trademark, recruits must routinely shrug off remarks such as "get your tits out" or "get your knickers (panties) off" from male colleagues who have been drinking.

Men in packed dealing rooms gleefully scan soft porn magazines during coffee breaks and whistle like workers on a building site if an attractive woman walks by.

Many British women who have flourished in this tough environment believe the barriers are not insurmountable. A woman must "give as good as you get" to survive and the onus for change is on her shoulders, they say.

"When I started eight years ago I think the main reason I was employed was because I was a woman and not unattractive — I make no bones about that," said a woman who heads a foreign exchange desk at a big European bank in London.

The bank initially wanted an attractive woman on its corporate team to woo customers but as time went on it realised she was capable

of far more and became more open about employing women, she said. Others agree.

"In the 1980s it was much more difficult — for a woman to get to the top she had to be a hell of a lot brighter than her average male counterpart," said Rhona O'Connell, a metals analyst at stockbrokers T. Hoare and Company.

"But in the 90s my feeling is that most men probably recognise a bright woman as being a potentially decent manager."

Most agree that aggression is important for both men and women in the frenetic, unforgiving world which became even more competitive after deregulation in 1986 transformed it from a more docile domain largely peopled by old boys from Britain's privileged public schools.

Women have infiltrated along with hard-nosed, more street-wise newcomers but are still concentrated in less stressful areas such as analysis or corporate relations.

On the dealing desks, frustrated traders pick on any weakness spotted in recruits. Women are often at a disadvantage because many are less prone to swear or explode in anger and take it personally when it happens to them, female traders say.

"You need to be a particular kind of person to survive in spot desk trading — you have to fight your own battles and come back with as good as you get if the dealers are being especially rude, crude or obnoxious," said the female exchange dealer.

Horror stories are plenty but the women who have stood the test believe that underneath the all too brusque exterior, they do have the respect of their male colleagues.

Sexual banter should be ignored or shrugged off and although the more democratic influence of American banks was welcomed, some women said the issue of what constitutes sexual harassment should not be taken as far as it is in the United States.

Ancient wrecks inspire hunt for sunken treasure

By Valerie Lee
Reuters

KAMPONG BALIK BATU, Malaysia — A stockbroker turned treasure hunter is convinced the Straits of Malacca off Malaysia is a murky graveyard for dozens of treasure-laden shipwrecks.

"There are a number of wrecks in this area," said Dorian Ball in this village 50 kilometres from the west Malaysian town of Malacca.

"I think for every mile of coastline in Malaysia there's a wreck," said Mr. Ball, a Briton who heads Malaysia Historical Salvors SDN BHD, specialising in salvaging sunken treasure.

He isn't alone in his belief.

Malaysian authorities recently detained an unregistered trawler for illegally salvaging porcelain ware from an 18th-century Dutch galleon, which sank off the west coast town of Port Dickson.

Marine police seized cases of china and porcelain aboard the trawler and arrested 12 men caught diving at the site.

Local press reports said the trawler was financed by wealthy businessmen from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Mr. Ball's company, the first officially hired by Malaysia's government to salvage a shipwreck, has also uncovered antique

porcelain and china, but in far larger amounts.

It has retrieved four tonnes of Ching dynasty porcelain over the past four weeks, local media reports said.

Mr. Ball said documents unearthed by the salvage firm from library work showed the merchant vessel, *Diana*, foundered on the rocks off the Malaccan coastline in 1817.

"Apparently the ship's captain was sick and went ashore, presumably to see a doctor," Mr. Ball said.

"She sailed off in the evening and the history books show that she hit a rock out there in the dark because the first mate was steering the vessel."

Mr. Ball, who has been

told by Malaysian authorities not to release operational details about the salvage work, said the three-masted vessel was headed for Calcutta loaded with cotton, silk, tea and porcelain from Macau.

"Most of the cargo has rotted away and only the porcelain is left," Mr. Ball said at the recovery site in Tanjung Bidara.

"There's very little left of the ship itself. It isn't like in the movies where you see the shipwreck intact. This is about the biggest piece of the ship there is," he said, picking up a block of dark, rotted wood about two feet (60 cm) in length.

Members of his team of 12 foreign divers take turns being lowered in a metal

cage 30 metres (100 ft) to *Diana's* wreck.

The team dives for nine hours a day, battling a strong undertow and visibility limited to an arm's length.

The operation has to be completed by the end of May when 64 oil tankers will call at a nearby jetty belonging to national oil company Petronas. There are fears the tankers could drop their 30-tonne anchors on the divers or the treasure they are trying to salvage.

Mr. Ball would not put a value on the porcelain already recovered by his crew. But Malacca Chief Minister Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik said *Diana* wreck was the biggest find in the region since the 1985

discovery of the Dutch ship *Geldermalsen*, which yielded the famous Nanjing cargo.

The Nanjing find yielded an estimated \$15 million from an auction by Christies in Amsterdam.

Mr. Abdul Rahim said the items on the *Diana* were of high quality and also likely to fetch good prices at an auction.

"The fact that the treasures are being salvaged legally, attracting worldwide attention, would create better demand for the items," Mr. Abdul Rahim told the New Straits Times newspaper.

He said there were at least a dozen ships buried in the waters off Malacca.

Malaysian federal authorities have not said what will happen to the recovered treasure but the government will reportedly get 30 per cent of the proceeds of any auction.

Abdul Aziz Mohammad, who heads a national committee dealing with the salvage of old wrecks, said Malaysia is new to salvage operations and is "looking at (guidelines) covering the whole gamut of operations."

"We are making a study of the guidelines produced by other countries as we do not have such detailed aspects here."

Mr. Abdul Aziz said the government has issued licences to four companies to salvage wrecks in the country's waters.

Portuguese naus, English schooners, Khmer trading ships, Japanese warships and even submarines — are reported to lie on the bottom of the Malacca Straits — the key shipping lane linking the Indian Ocean and the South China.

Malaysia, together with Indonesia, has set up a committee to salvage antiquities from the *Flor De La Mar*, the flagship of Portugal's famed Alfonso d'Albuquerque which sank in the Malacca Straits off Sumatra in 1512.

The *Flor De La Mar* is reputed to have carried billions worth in gold, jewels and artifacts, some plundered from the Malacca sultanate.

Leave a light on

By Jean-Claude Elias

When dealing with advanced technology people have the understandable but unfortunate tendency to lose touch with simple, practical solutions. The more technology gets sophisticated, the more, it obscures basic, elementary methods.

The number of tasks one can now perform using a personal computer (PC) has grown to make a virtually limitless list. A very important aspect however of making good use of PCs is realising that certain applications are not worth doing with a PC unless the machine is always powered on, ready to respond immediately.

One should start by reassuring users, correcting a commonly found, gross misconception. Leaving a PC on for twelve hours for instance is certainly better for its "health" than switching it on and off every few minutes. Modern machines, provided they are of good manufacturing quality, are designed to sustain long periods of continuous work.

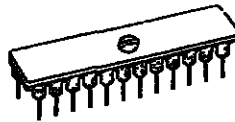
When a PC is switched on, the built-in power supply unit and the hard disk have to produce a certain "effort," electrically and mechanically speaking, in order to reach the required operating level, down from complete rest. Once they do, the complete system stays at a cruising speed that does not put too much stress on it. Actually it is not much different from most machinery: cars, aircraft, factory machines, etc.

In the office, people have made it a habit to leave PCs on all day long, realising that this has more convenient than constant switching on and off. Home users are still more reluctant to do so. Far to save energy, reduce the machine's wear and tear, and partly because they see no real need for that.

Some applications, in other respects very useful, are ignored because their eventual users find them too complicated and too long to activate if they have to power the PC on just for that. Let's consider a personal telephone directory for instance. Almost everybody maintains a manually written phone book at home with the names, numbers and sometimes addresses of relatives and friends.

A PC based phone book is a very basic software, widely available, inexpensive and easy to use. It keeps

chip talk



all records handy, tidy, sorted by alphabetical order. Additions, deletions are easily made and of course, search is instant. Should one need it, the PC will also print a hard copy of the phone book. Yet, if one had to switch the computer on, wait for the operating system to boot (be ready), load the phone book programme and then use it, each time one had to look up a number, then I fully agree that the manual system would be incomparably more practical. The secret therefore is in keeping the machine always on, ready to respond.

Other home applications like answering telephone calls and monitoring central heating or air-conditioning require constantly available computers.

Although modern personal computers are extremely reliable and heavy-duty, they are not designed to work 24 hours a day, like some professional banking systems that are never shut off. At best they can sustain 10 to 14 hours of continuous work. This still means that you can switch your PC on at 8 in the morning and off at 10 at night, which leaves you with a very sufficient margin of application.

The new, "green" PCs that have been launched this year, go even further. If not used for a few minutes, they automatically go back to what is called a sleeping mode in which they work at a reduced level. They consume less energy while still being switched on, ready to instantly resume work when asked to, without the need to re-boot. Not only electrical energy is saved but wear and tear is also drastically reduced. Theoretically, such PCs could be left on 24 hours a day.

It won't be long before PCs at home, just like refrigerators and telephone systems, become permanently powered on, ready to respond to our needs.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shunqir

FANTASTIC FACTS THE NAME OF ALLAH

Once you check the name of Allah in the world languages, you would find that His name consists of FOUR letters.

Let's demonstrate the name of Our Creator in these languages:

Arabic	Allah	English	Lord
French	Dieu	Latin	Deus
Dutch	God	German	Adat
Danish	Gud	Swedish	Gott
Portuguese	Deus	Italian	Roma
Spanish	Dios	Hebrew	Haik
Greek	Theos	Chinese	Haha
Great	Zeus	Japanese	Eid
Viking	Tor	Arabic	Odin
Phoenician	Baal	Hebrew	Kami
Hebrew	Yah	Arabic	Shin
Cananite	Amon	Portuguese	Amon
			Deus

LET'S ORAT IN ARABIC

COMMON PHRASES

I beg you.	Arjoob.
I beseech you.	Alawassal clay/claykon.
I conjure you.	Qasidid/Omshidokom.
I beg your mercy.	Astarhimokom.
May I crave your indulgence?	
Allow me to say a word to you.	Alawassal claykon an tatasahalo.
May I ask you a question?	Rid tasahal lee hem'aal?
Allow me to say a word to you.	Isasahal lee an idokoh lakom kalima.
Allow me to speak.	Isasahal lee an odakhin.
Will you do me a favour to lend me ten dinars?	
Will you do me a favour to lend me ten dinars?	Isasahal lee an idokoh lakom kalima.
Have the kindness to lend me your pen.	
Be kind enough to give me a glass of water.	Tasahal wa'atni kalamak.
Be kind enough to give me a glass of water.	Tasahal wa'atni kalamak.
I regret to disturb you.	Isasahal lee an idokoh lakom kalima.

RIDDLES

* A woman said to an author at a literary gathering: "I've been making my sides ache over your latest book."
The author was delighted: "Oh, really," he said, "did you find it very amusing?"
"No," she replied. "The fact is I took it to bed and fell asleep on top of it."

* A London secretary, placing cats in new homes describes to would-be adopters the animals' potentialities.
One is: "Willing to do light mousework!"

* A little girl had been reprimanded by her teacher for untidiness in her hair and dress. But she had spirit. "My mummy says," she replied, "it's not what I look like that matters. It's what I feel!"

* A lady got on a bus with seven children. The conductor asked:
"Are these all yours? Or is it a picnic?"
"They're all mine," came the reply. "And it's no picnic."

* Little girl watching TV wrestling: "Just look at those two men fighting in their play-pen."

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

- (1) To what sciences do the following terms belong?
— Isobars
— Dolichocephalic
— Oedipus complex
— Titration
— Exogamy
- (2) Who painted these pictures?
— Steam And Speed
— Hope
— The Last Of England
— The Bath Of Psyche
- (3) If a monkey is playing with the letters of the word "even", what are the chances of its arranging them in the proper order at the first attempt?

STRANGE CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Gypsies have no specific religion as they adopt the religion of the country in which they live though it is natural that they believe in some inherited myths coming down from their ancestors.

Among their marriage customs take, for instance, the Transvaal gypsy girl who throws a dish under the feet of her fiancé in the presence of the judge. Then she herself collects the broken pieces and carefully preserves them because it is thought that in case they had been lost or damaged, the bond of marriage would have immediately cut off.

In Spain the gypsy men themselves choose the husbands for their daughters and the girl has no right to reject the choice at all. The couple also are not allowed to meet each other before marriage.

PUZZLES

(A) DIVIDING THE DIAGRAM
Divide the diagram into four sections of equal size and shape, so that each contains a set of four identical symbols.

(B) LADIES, PLEASE!
If a feminine first name is substituted for each dash below, a common English word can be made in each case.

1. C ————— R
2. G ————— T
3. T ————— FUL
4. M ————— M
5. M ————— LIN
6. —————

The face of al eid

By E. Yaghi

I always love al eid, though it involves a lot of work. It seems that the whole world is adorned for the festivities as children dressed in ruffles, ribbons, bow ties and patent leather shoes congregate around the parks and swings to celebrate in their own way those delights they relish. On the holiday eve, last minute shoppers bustle to and fro with bundles purchased from shops open all night. And some last minute customers stop by the neighbourhood cafeteria to get some soda or ice cream and rest for a while on park benches nearby.

By seven a.m. on the first eid day, my house was full of visitors and I, awake since five in the morning had the hot sugarless Arab coffee ready to serve. My three-at-home sons spent the last few minutes before the guests arrived glaring threateningly at each other in remembrance of their tripartite war that occurred the night before. After nearly pulling out what was left of my why-mothers-get-gray-hair, I painstakingly pleaded with them: "Why are you all mad at each other? You're supposed to be too old for fighting and besides, where's your holiday spirit?"

Like a judge, I listened to their complaints which of course were baseless. Two things were really at the core of the whole affair. The first was that each one never forgave the next younger than himself for being born and the second was because each was ordered to clean his room so that to the unexpected guest who passed by their quarters unawares wouldn't think we kept some kind of captive animals in dens. My sons have this phobia that it is unmanly to lift a finger as far as housework is concerned. My middle son even begged me to iron his clothes after I just finished preparing a special breakfast for him because he woke up at 11. With the saddest most forlorn look on his face he pleaded: "Please, please come and iron my clothes!"

"Can't you see how busy I am? Instead of you helping me clean the house, you want me to waste time ironing for each one of you who wakes up at his leisure. Go do your clothes yourself!"

His expression changed from sadness to utter despair and he retorted with "but you're my mother and it's your duty to iron my clothes."

"Yes, I'm your mother, not your slave, there's a difference you know. Instead of you making my work less, you find more chores for me to do."

However, to save my precious time, I finally gave in and ironed his jeans (pure cowhide) and a sport shirt. A little later, his father demanded that his sons clean up their rooms. They, in a state of disbelief that so much should be asked of them, began to clean as if they were moving a mountain which in a way, I guess they were. It

was then that the quarrelling began and I literally was forced to separate them before they acted like uncivilised beasts. To my satisfaction, I curbed their disagreements until the next day when they were at it again. At last, the wild monsters that thrive in each of them subsided and they put off their disagreements until a later time.

After I managed to squeeze lunch in before the second onslaught of guests arrived, the bell rang just as I finished the last of an ocean of dishes. By the screams on the stairs, I knew we were being invaded by the biannual hoard of small monkeys dressed in human skin that accompany their parents, who numbered around seven adults in all, not to mention the creatures that scurried hither and thither so fast no one could count them. Their mission was one of attack and destroy as soon as possible before their elders issued the cherished statement I delight to hear most: "Come on gang, let's get going!"

Now, I love children but only when they act sweet and innocent like, not when they become Godzilla and behave like they have to demolish my home. What really gets me is not the kids, but how their parents suddenly become blind and deaf to all that their children do. They spill tea on the carpets, crush cookies into smithereens, thread their way through every room in the house and stand and scream from the top of our five-story building all the way down to the ground floor. They are thirsty by turn and make repeated visits to the kitchen followed by bathroom, one by one, until even after their parents finally get up and decide to leave. The only time their parents even look the same direction as their children is to sigh in adoration with, "oh, isn't he/she cute?"

I grit my teeth and try to force a gracious smile as I mumble, "yes, as cute as a killer shark."

At last they left and I made note of the path of destruction such as dusty footprints on that carpet I just washed the day before, black fingerprints on the wall I finally got around to scrubbing, tea stains on the kitchen floor I didn't get around to washing until after midnight and the list goes on and on. It is then that I scratched my head and wondered why anyone bothers to clean their house before the eid if it is going to get dirtier than it was before.

The last of our visitors on the first day of the holiday left at 11 p.m. that night. What a relief. I thought the day would never end. Actually, I've seriously considered going abroad on these occasions to avoid everything to do with the steady stream of guests that continue to arrive. Meanwhile, my three sons have almost become more civilised towards each other and their sibling rivalry is nearly tamed for a while at least. Happy eid everyone.

Australian stockmen curse, but still wax lyrical

By Michael Perry
Reuter

LONGREACH, Australia — By day they sweat and curse as their bones crack and skin blisters, but by night Australia's stockmen rest their weary bodies and praise the harsh and unforgiving land with rhyme and verse.

Their theatre: A crackling camp fire under a starlit sky or a homestead dinner table, several hours drive from town.

Like their forebears who more than 100 years ago first herded cattle and sheep across Australia's dusty plains, today's stockmen and drovers have a passion for poetry and storytelling.

"Her husband bent above her with cold terror at his heart. The form was still he loved so well, the wan lips would not part and the day in trance she lay, but when the stars smiled down, he heard his name low-whispered and he claimed her still his own. And afterward he spoke his fear: 'Hearts love, if you should die...'"

Bill Rinehart, whose mouth is home to two lonely crooked teeth, grins with pleasure as he recites his favourite Will Ogilvie poem The Riding Of The Rebel around a drovers' camp fire on the road to Longreach, Queensland.

"Here it's manly to recite poetry," says Rinehart, 64, a drover and poet since his rebellious teenage years. "It's a way of life. We have been brought up that way."

Oldtimers like Rinehart sought company from the words of Australia's early poets — Andrew Banjo Paterson, Henry Lawson and Ogilvie — when they first headed west. They penned their own verses to beat the loneliness of the outback.

"When I started poetry there was no television, wireless. We had to entertain ourselves, so we learnt

poetry," he says. Yet while technology has tempered the outback's isolation, young stockmen toiling on the endless plains of grass and trees still carry on the bush's literary tradition.

Boss drover Rian Morgan, 25, sits tall in the saddle, a cattleman's hat shading his face and his rougher boots decorated with a glistening pair of spurs.

Morgan, 6ft 7 inch (2.2 metres) tall, is the youngest son of a second generation Queensland cattle grazier. He is the classic stockman, but is also a man of letters.

Since he first pulled on a pair of riding boots the words of bush poets and storytellers filled his head. In the Morgan home you can't leave the dinner table until you recite a poem.

"We encouraged our children to read poems because we didn't want them to watch television and they have appreciated it," says Rian's mother Margaretta Morgan.

Storytelling is no idle hobby for Rian. Last year while in hospital with a bad back he completed a short-story writing course by correspondence with the University of Queensland.

"When I am droving I have lot of time to think about stories. I usually carry a small notepad, jot down different scenarios and late at night sit down and write them down," he says during a break in moving 1,000 head of cattle from Longreach to Condamine, a four-month 1,800 kilometre trip.

"I like reading (South African adventure novelist) Wilbur Smith. I think I'd like to do something like that but in Australia," he says. "In two or three years time, depending on the droving, I'd like to set myself up and write."

In recent years bush publishing has boomed thanks to advances in desktop publishing technology, says

Laurie Muller, general manager of the Queensland University Press. "It is probably the most documented generation we have had in this country," says Muller. "There must be 40,000 to 50,000 bush stories now in print which will never be lost."

"When out in a bush camp people either spin yarns or read a beautiful poem that satisfies the soul. I genuinely think it's part of this bloody country."

Explaining why stockmen, many with little education, love poetry, he says: "Poetry is the hardest to master. To write poetry you don't need any qualifications... Just feelings."

Self publishing has also allowed many people to record their family history and tell previously unwritten stories of Australia's rural heritage, says Marli O'Hanlon, supervisor of the bookshop at the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach.

"I think people are writing more. The interest in Australian history is what is driving it," says O'Hanlon. "We're getting older and leaving our British history behind."

Unlike his white mates, his stories are influenced by his aboriginal stories, echo the struggles of his people and have a hard, cutting political edge. "I have to be me and I am aboriginal. They are not religious but they are spiritual."

THOUGHTS FOR THIS WEEK

If you wish to avoid seeing a fool, you must first break your mirror — Francois Rabelais, French satirist (1494-1553).

Most of us probably feel we couldn't be free without newspapers, and that is the real reason we want the newspapers to be free — Edward R. Murrow, American broadcast journalist (1905-1965).

In scandal, as in robbery, the receiver is always as bad as the thief — Lord Chesterfield, English author and statesman (1694-1773).

Everybody thinks of changing humanity, and nobody thinks of changing himself — Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist (1828-1910).

There are two ways to slice easily through life, to believe everything or to doubt everything. Both ways save us from thinking — Alfred Horzyski, Polish-American linguist (1879-1959).

JTV PROGRAMME NOT RECEIVED

مكتبة من الكتب

Tarantino's triumph — sellout to Hollywood?

By John Follain
Reuters

CANNES, France — The victory at Cannes of controversial American director Quentin Tarantino has ruffled feathers at the world's top film festival.

Screen legend Clint Eastwood, himself a controversial figure as president of the festival's 46-member jury, brushed aside suggestions that the event had sold out to Hollywood.

But the sight of Tarantino and his *Pulp Fiction* cast, including John Travolta and Bruce Willis, wildly embracing each other at the Golden Palm ceremony sparked worries that Cannes had turned its back on a tradition of rewarding "arty" European or Third World films.

Pulp Fiction, a racy thriller mixing carefree violence and crude humour, is seen by some critics as a typical market-oriented Hollywood production at odds with such past winners as *The Piano* and *Farewell My Concubine*.

French newspapers Tuesday put the blame squarely on the broad shoulders of Eastwood, saying he had

done his utmost to defend U.S. colours.

The daily *Le Quotidien* said the Golden Palm had been "stolen or skillfully negotiated, unless the charm of the American 'star system' was the most significant factor in Cannes — whether that of Clint Eastwood himself or of Quentin Tarantino."

Asked whether the violence of Tarantino's Los Angeles hoodlums had been considered in the award, Eastwood said he was bound by festival rules not to discuss the prizes.

"It was a democratic de-

cision," he said during the gala dinner which followed the Golden Palm ceremony.

"People thought it was original. I can't say how I voted."

Festival director Gilles Jacob dismissed fears that Hollywood had bought out Cannes, saying the festival had no tradition to stick to.

"We've always had some juries which go for more popular films or for more art films. There's no law," he said.

"Controversy is good for films. Our aim is to help cinema, so we are in favour of anything which helps dis-

cover new talents," Jacob said.

Film buyers stressed Tarantino was a typical of Hollywood, despite the violent scenes, because of his talent for dialogue and story-telling.

"Cannes hasn't turned its back on its vocation because Tarantino's work is a parody of America. It's Americana rather than American and owes a lot to European directors," said Paul Brett of the British Distributors' Guild, which will have *"Pulp Fiction"* among its titles.

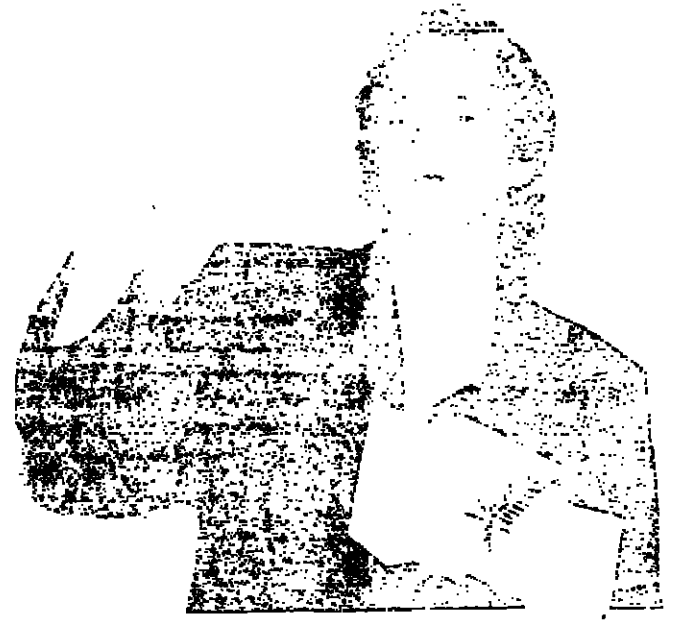
Nor is violence new to the

Golden Palm.

In 1971, Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* won despite controversy over actress Jodie Foster's depiction of a child prostitute. So much blood was spilled in that film that the screen drained to seep to lessen the effect.

Tarantino himself, who is more successful in Europe than in America, has little time for his detractors.

When a few shouts of disapproval greeted his award Monday evening, he shot back a four-letter word and accompanied it with an obscene gesture.



Quentin Tarantino

Top Chinese actress still living with adversity

By John Follain
Reuters

CANNES, France — No other actress competing for honours at the Cannes Film Festival has often had her film banned or threatened with censorship, but China's Gong Li is accustomed to adversity.

Her director, award-winning Zhang Yimou, has started away from the French resort to try and save his most work *Wu Zhe* (To Live) from Beijing's censors.

The director says retracing China's political upheavals since the Communists took power in the 1940s, its film-making coincided with a crackdown by the authorities on independent-minded film-makers.

"They took measures against films showing outside China and directors have been blacklisted," Gong Li, 28, a cult figure in her homeland and widely acclaimed abroad, said in a recent interview.

"Of course this affects all of us. Directors are starting

to wonder if they can do this or that film. Things have got more strict," she said, speaking through an interpreter.

Asked what China's film community could do to resist such pressures, she answered: "There isn't any organised lobby. But people are worried and should do more."

In April, Beijing authorities effectively banned seven directors from working in mainland China after they screened films at the Rotterdam Film Festival.

When the government recently banned films made outside China from running for the Hundred Flowers and Golden Rooster Prizes, the country's top film awards, Zhang wrote a letter to protest.

Gong Li is among those most affected by such measures, because of the high profile she and her partner Zhang enjoy abroad and because films like *To Live* are financed by Taiwan-based producers.

Ju Dou, nominated for Best Foreign Film in the

Oscars, was branded a portrait of a backward China and banned.

Raise the Red Lantern, which took the Silver Lion in Venice in 1991, was in limbo until Beijing finally approved it in 1993.

Born just before the Cultural Revolution of 1966, which attempted to reshape the intellectual class, Gong Li was swept up in the events which form the backdrop to *To Live*.

"My parents worked as schoolteachers and they resisted against the revolution. They were taken away for a time."

"I was very young and I thought they'd done something wrong. I don't understand the scale and complexity of what was happening."

Later, her two brothers and her sister were sent to the countryside, she said, explaining: "Chairman Mao Tse-tung dictated that all children should be educated by the peasants."

She was teaching at Beijing's drama school when Zhang spotted her and cast



Chinese actress Gong Li and actor Gao Yuanyuan pose for photographs at the screening of the Chinese film *Wu Zhe* (To Live)

her for the lead in his first film, *Red Sorghum*.

She went on to win a host of prizes including best actress in Venice in 1992 for *The Story Of Qiu Ju*.

The film that Gong Li has taken to Cannes in her

fourth appearance at the festival marks a departure in the type of role she plays. She typically has portrayed strong, outspoken women.

"In *To Live*, I have a more difficult part than in other films. I'm an ordinary, nondescript woman

and that's more difficult to play than somebody with a strong personality," she said.

"The story is about endurance, the will to live, and how the Chinese people have to suffer and bear."

Harrowing Maori film makes New Zealanders flinch

By Mark Trevelyan
Reuters

WELLINGTON — If audiences are shocked, even sickened, by scenes from his film *Once Were Warriors*, then New Zealand director Lee Tamahori makes no apology.

Tamahori's explosive cinematic debut, screening at the Cannes Film Festival, is the tragic story of a Maori family at the mercy of a drunken father who beats his wife and terrorises his children.

Tamahori, 44, who would love to emulate the success of fellow Kiwi director Jane Campion with *The Piano*, says he wanted viewers to see the full horror of domestic violence.

"I wasn't going to do it if we were going to neutralise or dilute the violence," Tamahori, a Maori, said in an interview.

another place he would be a much better human being. "This nobility and all this pride had become lost by virtue of exposure to another culture, a far more formidable culture which had ridden over the top of it — namely white European colonising culture."

Still, there are moments of hope in the film.

As death unites Beth and the children in grief, she decides to leave Jack and return to her roots. The film's most moving scene is of the family mourning over Grace's open coffin at a traditional Maori funeral.

Tamahori, who based *Once Were Warriors* on a book by Maori novelist Alan Duff, admitted he feared both of them might be accused of disloyalty to their own people.

"I was always worried about what Maori would think about it, because it is essentially a story about our own people. So we just kept driving hope, heart and positive things into it."

In fact, he said, Maoris who attended the premiere in Auckland this month were unanimous in their praise.

"They didn't like what it had to say, but they said it was a truth and a reality, and it had to be said. With tears in their eyes they said this," Tamahori said.

Better known until now as a director of commercials, he admits he initially shied away from making the film because its themes — wife-beating, rape, death — were too dark.

"It was compelling, riveting... I thought there were parts of that were unremittably bleak and if you were to film that book page by page, people would just leave the theatre."

Now working on two more film ideas with Maori themes, he hopes *Once Were Warriors* will win acclaim from critics and distributors in Cannes, where it screens out of competition.

The Piano, which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes last year, went on to capture Oscars for two New Zealanders — Campion as Best Director and Anna Paquin as Best Supporting Actress — as well as a Best Actress Award for American Holly Hunter.

Tamahori acknowledges his film may be too harrowing to win commercial success — "it's too confrontational, and I suspect some people will just find it too hard."

But he wants viewers to find *Once Were Warriors* an ultimately uplifting experience. "It's a tragedy, but out of that tragedy hope springs eternal and there's light at the end of the tunnel. I'd like people to think the human spirit is paramount and it can rise above all tragedy and all adversity."

Bollywood told to clean up sexy act

By Anil Penna
Agence France Presse

NEW DELHI — It started with "Choli Ke Peeche Kya Hai" (What Is Behind The Blouse) — a Bollywood character song to a rock folk music that sold 10 million albums.

Then came the highlight of the film, a scene in which the heroine, played by the actress Shabana Azmi, is seen in an India-wide debate on obscenity in films after a New Delhi lawyer took the case to court.

The attorney, R.K. Chugh, said his four-year-old son had accused him of sexual harassment by singing it at a shopping centre to women who accused him of teaching the song to the child.

He lost his case. The answer to the naughty opening lyrics follows immediately — "beneath the blouse lies the heart" — and Judge S.N. Chopra said it was decent enough for public consumption in the orthodox country.

But the unspoken innuendo in the blouse number of 1993 — which became the slogan for road-side Romeo known as "eve-tensers" — set a trend that has seen film lyrics and their picturisation get naughtier and naughtier.

The trend aroused enough concern in parliament and outside for the government to call a meeting to tackle vulgarity in the movies by tightening censorship.

"Today they are merely asking what lies behind the choli," TV star-turned-MP

Arvind Trivedi said at the meeting attended by 150 film-makers, politicians and critics. "Tomorrow they will actually show what lies behind."

"Sexy, sexy, sexy — they call me," went a song in which young actress Karishma Kapoor, grand-daughter of legendary film-maker Raj Kapoor, wriggled her posterior in suggestive fashion in front of the camera.

The censors ordered the film-maker to change the lyrics to "baby, baby, baby" but the original version had already become popular after being shown repeatedly on cable and satellite TV.

More explicit Hindi lyrics with double-entendres that translate into "I will put it in" and "it is up" followed.

Many songs with double entendres are accompanied

by pelvic thrusts and simulated love-making bordering on the pornographic, critics say.

In "Raja" (Rose), a highly acclaimed film about the Muslim insurgency in Kashmir, a song goes: "what happened on the wedding night... the bed started shaking..."

The film "Raja Babu" (Prince), women dressed as nurses lift their saris and the leading man drops his pants. In "Aankhen," (Eyes), the same leading man is shown ducking his head into the heroine's skirt.

Both films, directed by David Dhawan, are among the biggest box-office grossers in India.

"The numbers are too vulgar. First we have songs about what is behind the blouse and now we have

what is behind the skirts," choreographer Chinni Prakash, whose cousin Tarun directed Raja Babu dances, told *The Week* magazine.

A survey sponsored by the Media Advocacy Group and the National Commission for Women said most men believed that "all girls are like those portrayed on the screen."

Woman students of the Delhi University said in the survey they were being pestered by cat-callers who sang out: "Oye, oye, are you sexy?"

"Films are inculcating wrong attitudes and children are more gullible," said the study.

More seriously, multiple-murderer "Auto" Shanker, a scooter-rickshaw driver sentenced to death for raping and killing several women in southern India,

told a court he had been influenced by films.

Film-makers argue that their productions are reflecting the reality of present-day India and not influencing the sex crimes and violence that have aroused so much concern.

And some of them say they have to include sex and violence to pack them in at a time when they are battling competition from video cassettes and cable television.

But they have little support from decision-makers.

K.P. Singh Deo, the information minister, said it had become necessary to "exercise restraint upon what is shown" in films because they had so much power to "instill and cultivate either violent or good behaviour."

Wild Swans author trains sights on Mao

By Gareth Jones
Reuters

LONDON — Jung Chang may be one of the world's bestselling authors but she still seems taken aback by her rapid rise to literary stardom.

"I was absolutely flummoxed and stunned by the success of *Wild Swans*," said Jung, whose autobiographical account of modern China has topped the best-seller lists in over a dozen countries since its publication.

"I wrote it with my heart and am very pleased that people all over the world were able to respond to it in the same way," with their hearts," she told Reuters in an interview at her West London home.

Wild Swans is the tale of three generations of Chinese women — Jung, her mother and grandmother — caught up in the turmoil of 20th century China.

It charts their experiences

under feudal warlords, the wartime Japanese occupation and Mao Tse-tung's Communist rule.

The book has been translated into 26 languages from Finnish to Japanese. In Britain it was the top-selling paperback for 39 weeks and still ranks as number two.

Earlier this year, the British publishing industry named *Wild Swans*, published by HarperCollins, as book of the year.

"I think the reason *Wild Swans* has been so successful is that it is a human story and its humanity cuts across cultural, ideological and racial divides," Jung said.

With a shy smile, she points to her desk piled high with correspondence from readers and admirers worldwide.

The study, its polished wooden floors gleaming in the spring sunshine, is adorned with oriental antiques, wall scrolls and shelves of books in English and Chinese.

Jung has just returned from a trip to Japan, where she said people constantly stopped her in the streets to shake her hand and tell her how much they had appreciated her book.

"It is very exciting to see how much our family story has been appreciated all over the world," said Jung.

Jung came to Britain in 1978, the first person from her province to travel abroad to study after China began the tortuous process of opening up to the outside world after Mao's rule. She gained a doctorate in linguistics at York University and married an English historian.

Before fame overtook her, propelling her into a dizzying whirl of book launches and social events, Jung worked as a television researcher and as a teacher.

Though translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan and Hong Kong, *Wild Swans* is still not on sale in the People's Repub-

lic of China.

"But it can be sent into China and people can read it openly. Reporters can't refer to it, though. Media and publishing are among the last areas of tight party control."

Jung often visits China to research her next project, a book about Mao Tse-tung, which she will co-author with her husband.

On Mao, whose shadow looms large in *Wild Swans*, Jung said: "I think he was undoubtedly a genius who dominated China by his personal skills. His every whim was a command for China's billion people. No other ruler has wielded such power."

In her book, Jung recounts how, as a young student, she made the long, tiring journey from her home in the Western province of Sichuan to Beijing hoping to catch a glimpse of Mao.

On the big day, she saw only the great helmsman's

back because of the huge crowds. Desperately disappointed, she contemplated suicide.

Such hysterical devotion is unlikely to be repeated now, she said, as China has opened up too far to be able to withdraw back down that path.

Jung said she was interviewing many older people in China for her book on Mao.

"They seemed much more willing to speak after they had read *Wild Swans*," she said.

"Many said they couldn't read the book at night because it was too painful, not so much for the physical sufferings they had experienced but because it reminded them of how their dreams had been crushed and their dedication wasted during the years of Mao's rule."

Jung's mother, a key figure in the book who personally petitioned Mao's Prime Minister Zhou En-

li for the release of her imprisoned husband, still lives in China.

"For my mother, the success of my book was even more wonderful."

Her mother, now 63, gave her the original idea to write *Wild Swans* while recounting her life to Jung a few years ago during a trip to England.

Jung's only sister has also remained in China but her three brothers — a physicist, a journalist and a businessman — have settled in Britain and France.

Her father, an idealistic high-ranking party member, died after being beaten, humiliated and driven to insanity after daring to criticise the Cultural Revolution in a letter to Mao.

"If my father were still alive, he would be proud of me because he always wanted me to become a writer, though he probably would not agree with all

that I have done."

Jake himself is reduced to channelling his aggression into bloody barroom brawls and using his fists on his wife.

Tamahori sees the hero as an anachronism — a man who is victim as well as tyrant because he is in the wrong age. "That was the great tragedy of his character."

find *Once Were Warriors* an ultimately uplifting experience. "It's a tragedy, but out of that tragedy hope springs eternal and there's light at the end of the tunnel. I'd like people to think the human spirit is paramount and it can rise above all tragedy and all adversity."

Concern grows over WHO drugs policy

By Andrew Chetley

LONDON — Attacks on Bangladesh and Thai drug policies based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) concept of "essential drugs" have fuelled concerns about whether WHO will maintain its global leadership on pharmaceutical issues.

The basic idea of the essential drugs approach is that about 270 medicines will meet at least 90 per cent of a country's entire medical needs, and that most of the other 100,000 preparations on offer around the world are unnecessary — especially to cash-strapped developing countries — ineffective, too expensive or even potentially hazardous.

The \$220 billion-a-year pharmaceutical industry opposes restricted lists, arguing that demand is best left to the market.

In both Thailand and Bangladesh, the pharmaceutical industry has been campaigning for the overthrow of key parts of national drug policies, which, by focussing on drugs considered most essential for public health, can save countries and consumers money and improve the quality of treatment.

Without a clear national policy, many governments find it difficult to counter the economic and political power of the international pharmaceutical industry.

As part of Thailand's drug policy, earlier this year the country's Food and Drug Administration proposed guidelines for the generic or chemical name of a drug, as well as the brand name, on all labelling and advertising.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers associations from both the United States and Europe have protested. Representing more than 2,000 pharmaceutical companies — many with substantial business interests in Thailand — they cited the

"Uruguay Round" of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to claim that the Thai proposal would "infringe trademark laws" and "constitute a severe non-tariff barrier to trade."

Canada, U.S., Uruguay, Denmark, Australia and the Philippines have similar policies. Several WHO documents recommended the use of generic names in labelling and advertising. Among these documents is the WHO Ethical Criteria for Medicinal Drug Promotion — which the pharmaceutical industry helped draft.

In Bangladesh, which became the first country to implement the WHO essential drugs concept when it adopted a drug policy in 1982, foreign-based pharmaceutical companies have been calling for its dismantling since a new civilian government took office in 1990.

Although the policy has increased the supply of essential drugs, held down prices, stimulated local production, and saved millions of dollars in foreign exchange, the industry claims it has discouraged foreign investors.

In recent months Finance Minister Saifur Rahman has sided with the industrialists as part of the government's drive to foster a market economy. Press reports suggest that he has developed a set of administrative orders that would effectively dismantle the policy.

Industry group, "Health For Nation," published advertisements in February thanking him and saying "the country is about to be relieved from the destructive effect of the drug policy."

Despite promoting free trade initiatives in many countries, the World Bank has joined WHO and UNICEF in publicly supporting the benefits of the national

drug policy in Bangladesh. More generally, drawing on the policies developed by WHO, the World Bank argues that government involvement in regulation to "discourage the over-use and over-prescription" of drugs "is necessary."

The World Bank — which has become a major investor in pharmaceutical work over the past 10 years — has expressed concern about WHO's role. Its pharmaceuticals specialist, Denis Broun, said "WHO's leadership on pharmaceuticals is not as active as it has been. This could be a very serious problem."

In January, WHO's executive head was expected to discuss progress by the organization's Action Programme on Essential Drugs (APED), set up to help governments develop drug policies that ensure all people are able to obtain the drugs they need at the lowest possible prices; that these drugs are safe and effective; and that they are prescribed and used rationally.

However, a report on the programme failed to materialise. Dr. Sam Okware, a board member from Uganda, described the lack of a formal report on the programme as "rather unusual", particularly as it had been requested by governments two years earlier.

Dr. Okware said APED's work was "very important" to a country like Uganda: "Our national drug policy is based on the resolutions that have been adopted at the World Health Assembly. As a result, we have been able to save money, and to ensure that there is no major wastage on drugs. It is very important that we get this encouragement to develop drug policies."

Marit Andrew, deputy assistant director-general of the Norwegian Board of Health, said the Norwegian government was "encouraging WHO to maintain and

strengthen the Action Programme on Essential Drugs. This is a very important programme. We want to be certain that WHO will give it the necessary status and attention."

APED has been without a permanent director for nearly a year, which is one reason given for the lack of the comprehensive report. In March, WHO's director-general, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, announced the appointment of Margaretha Helling-Borda to the post. He also told APED's management advisory committee that "it must be our duty and our responsibility to stand firm on the principle of health for all, that is, equality in access to healthcare and drugs."

Dr. Nakajima called for increased attention to the inappropriate use of drugs, which he described as "a source of great concern everywhere," because it wastes resources and — in the case of misuse of antibiotics — risks serious long-term health consequences.

APED's management advisory committee, which represents the views of many donors to the programme and other interested parties, stressed at its March meeting that "WHO's leadership in providing access to essential drugs to those most in need of them has become more important than ever at a time when poor countries are facing desperate shortages of medicines."

The committee approved a \$19.8 million budget for the 1994-95 programme. Said Margaretha Helling-Borda: "We have more requests coming from member states for activities than we can handle."

The number of WHO member states requesting and receiving technical assistance from the programme increased from 52 in 1990-91 to 80 in 1992-93. They included a growing number of African coun-

Prescription for the medicine-makers

Half the world has no access to medicines for the most common diseases

But many countries have a glut of inappropriate drugs - ineffective, too expensive, or potentially hazardous

Pharmaceutical market has been called a 'therapeutic jungle' - 5,000 active substances compounded into 100,000 different preparations. Global sales: \$220bn

World Health Organization says the market is overcrowded: it recommends national lists based on about 270 drugs that will meet 90% of all needs in any country

tries and countries from Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Denis Broun said that

although it was not clear what future developments would hold for pharmaceuticals at WHO, the World Bank would be "happy to work with a re-

generated pharmaceuticals programme at WHO."

Dr. Stuart Nightingale of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said that

following Dr. Nakajima's comments "it appears that WHO is committed to continuing a strong programme in the pharmaceuticals area" — Panos Features.

Battle against Canada's health care fraud heats up

By Jeffrey Ulbrich
The Associated Press

TORONTO — It's clear that some Canadians are cheating their health-care system. The question is, for how much?

Ontario Health Minister Ruth Grier, for one, knows that fraud costs her province tens of millions of dollars, perhaps hundreds of millions.

Health care is Canada's largest industry. Each of the 10 provinces and two territories operates its own system under rules set down in the federal health act. Doctors bill the provincial government directly for services, using the patient's health card number. So do laboratories and hospitals.

Ontario, Canada's most populous province, spends \$12.8 billion a year on health care, one-third of its budget. With that much money involved, there is plenty of room for fraud.

"We have been content for 35 years of Medicare to be generous and not ask any questions," Ms. Grier said in an interview. "Now we realise we have to be more careful about allowing access to it."

Estimates of how much the Ontario system could be losing to fraud range from \$473 million, cited in a confidential ministry report last year, to \$477 million, mentioned by the minister last week while announcing plans for new, more sophisticated health cards.

Fraud includes falsely obtaining health cards or lending them, overbilling by doctors and performing unnecessary medical procedures.

Media reports have spoken of waves of Americans coming to Canada to escape high U.S. health costs by fraudulently seeking treatment. But there is no hard evidence of this.

Dr. Keith Macleod, who practices in Windsor, across the border from Detroit, said a more frequent prob-

lem is Canadians who marry Americans and live in the United States, but maintain a Canadian health card.

"These are ordinary, everyday, honest people who wouldn't rob from the church, wouldn't rob a bank, but (would) screw the government," he said.

There are also some Americans who own summer cottages in Canada and have tapped into the system.

Ontario has a population of 11 million and, at one time, more than 14 million of its plastic health cards were in circulation. Now about 1.8 million cards — duplicates and some issued to dead people — have been cancelled.

Mrs. Grier said the new cards will have a photograph and a magnetic strip containing basic patient information. The project will cost \$22 million a year for three years.

The photo and holographic overlay will end the lending of cards and reduce the number of counterfeits. Under the current system, doctors have no way to check a card's validity.

There is more information on an Ontario fishing licence than on the current health card. And the penalties for misuse are greater, said Dr. Kevin Moran, who works in Toronto.

"If the natural resources guys find you with one extra trout, they can take your boat and your car. They can impound everything you've got," he said.

Ontario has also beefed up its health-fraud squad from two people to 10. It currently has 177 cases under active investigation, but only seven are in the courts.

Catching doctors is more difficult. Health Department computers detect thousands of suspicious claims every year, but only a few are investigated. What's more, investigations are carried out by the Medical Review Committee

of the Ontario Medical Association — a bit like the fox overseeing the chickens.

Only about 50 cases a year are examined by the Medical Review Committee, which sometimes orders a doctor to make repayments to the health system. Rarely is fraud by a doctor turned over to police

for criminal investigation. And there are laboratories owned by doctors, who in turn order more tests than necessary, said Ted Avey, an accounting expert paid by the Health Department to find holes in the system. "You are talking about billions of dollars — small dollars adding up to a lot," he said.

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. — Isobars to meteorology.
— Dolichocephalic to anthropology.
— Oedipus complex to psycho-pathology.
— Titration to chemistry.
— Exogamy to sociology.
2. ■ Steam And Speed by Joseph Turner, an English landscape painter (1775-1851).
■ Hope by George Watts, an English painter (1817-1904).
■ The Last Supper, by Leonardo Da Vinci, an Italian painter (1452-1519).
■ The Last of England, by Ford Madox Brown, an English painter (1821-1893).
■ Bath Of Psyche, by Frederick Leighton, an English artist (1830-1896).
3. There are 24 (4x3x2) arrangements possible of four letters; but in this case there are two e's and so two of these arrangements will spell 'even'. The chances are then one in twelve, or eleven to one against.

PUZZLES

(A) DIVIDING THE DIAGRAM

(B) LADIES, PLEASE
The common word in each case is:

1. C — ELLA — R
2. G — ANNE — T
3. T — RUTH — FUL
4. M — ADA — M
5. M — ALICE
6. MAUD — LIN

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

RAIL TO THE CHIEF

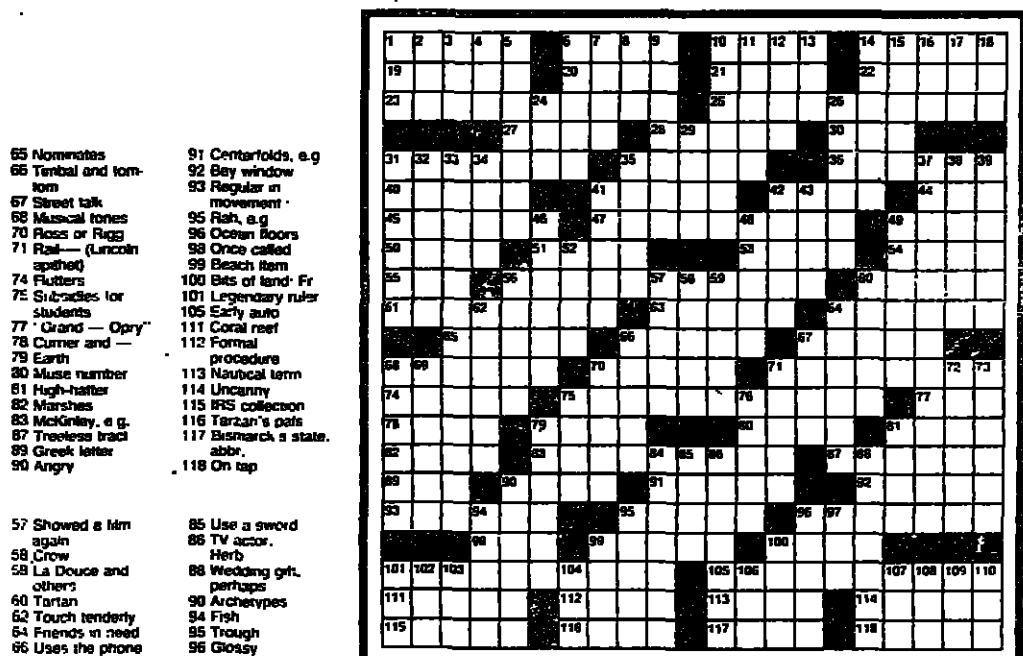
By Harold B. Counts

- ACROSS
1. Gives off smoke
 2. Suits
 3. Suits, usually
 4. North
 5. "Blunder"
 6. Power
 7. Clean the blackboard
 8. Suits
 9. Suits
 10. Suits
 11. Suits
 12. Suits
 13. Suits
 14. Suits
 15. Suits
 16. Suits
 17. Suits
 18. Suits
 19. Suits
 20. Suits
 21. Suits
 22. Suits
 23. Suits
 24. Suits

- DOWN
1. Fabled bird
 2. Addition to a house
 3. Yale student
 4. Relative
 5. Power
 6. Banner of a kind
 7. Name in electricity
 8. — glance (immediately)
 9. Kind of show
 10. Stringer
 11. Accusation
 12. Dancer
 13. Hardwood
 14. Dancer
 15. Music of poetry
 16. Risen
 17. Legend
 18. Word of agreement
 19. OFCC product

- Diagramless 10x19, By Francis Barton
- ACROSS
1. Memorable time periods
 2. What not to put before a horse
 3. Gritte harrow
 4. Garfield's canine friend
 5. Grant
 6. Cleaning implement
 7. Frank Lloyd Wright, e.g.
 8. Spring month
 9. Lacking
 10. Family member
 11. Solid features
 12. — of the Union
 13. Spoken
 14. Fodder
 15. Member
 16. German river
 17. Holy Land
 18. Eddie mits

- DOWN
1. Build
 2. Impenetrable
 3. — of the Union
 4. Deep sleeps
 5. Sun-dried brick
 6. Matures
 7. Seasonment of beef
 8. Officers
 9. There com
 10. Spring month
 11. Lacking
 12. Family member
 13. Solid features
 14. — of the Union
 15. Spoken
 16. Fodder
 17. Member
 18. German river
 19. Holy Land
 20. Eddie mits



Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Forced by flooded river to flee, man floated away on base violin; his wife accompanied him on the piano.
2. Zealous young owner of lemonade stand offers senior citizen discounts to all good customers over twenty-five years old.
3. All five vowels are found in "pneumonia." Few other words can present this claim.
4. Sex therapist was vexed when her evil old ex put a hex on the nest spouse.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. O E J L G M E S B I K U J B I G G I E S N I X Q S N G
K L I K E K G B I K G Z A O I K U X Y R N G M
M O O S E A U Q M E I G Y K U M I Z M E X.

— By Duane H. McGee

2. B S J J R K H A F Q T U K A L K F H F C R B B S L M
B T I M K H T B B A A L C J A Q T L F D R A D B K T J
D T I T U K C S J K.

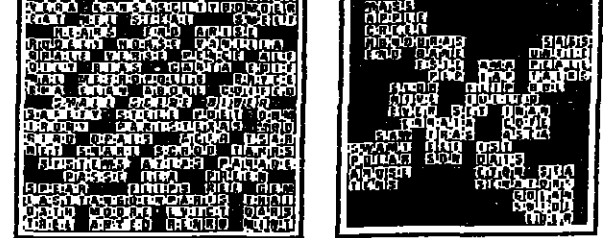
— By Earl Irvin

3. N E R V U N I B Z N Y N G H Q L Q M N Q K C C G N
Q R G R C Q M G Q B Z R V E Y G C Q V W M N I R B
Z V V R N E Q V Y C U V C E V G Q L G E W K C V G Q L.

— By Rita Salvato

4. C A L U U I O R L O C I S A N K K Y E C
N O A N A C E K E A R Y U B Y A E C L A C K I S U N K
B E T T I S I N K B U T T.

— By Ed Huddleston



Dutch welfare woes could snag coalition

By Ian Geoghegan
Reuters

THE HAGUE — A three-way coalition likely to form the next Dutch government could have a short shelf-life because of party differences over reforms to the country's troubled welfare system.

General elections this month produced an overwhelming protest vote against soaring unemployment, crime and government inertia in tackling a spendthrift social security system that effectively encourages people not to seek work.

Labour emerged as the largest party, despite heavy losses, and will probably form the first three-way coalition in 12 years, with the conservative Liberals and left-leaning D66 — the so-called "Purple Alliance" because of its mix of party hues.

But piecing together a workable government for the next four years is likely to prove even more tortuous than normal.

Commentators have warned that such a coalition would be unstable, given fundamental differences between Labour and Liberals on major policy issues such as social welfare.

The Liberals want to take a hatchet to the social security system, proposing huge cuts as part of a radical overhaul, while Labour favours the scalpel and micro-surgery.

The three party leaders are to meet this week to decide whether there is enough common ground for them to go on and produce a blueprint for government policy.

But the Central Economic Committee (CEC) — an influential think-tank of top civil servants — has demanded big budget cuts, highlighting the gulf between the potential partners.

In a report prepared for the three party leaders, the CEC calls for a new government to cut spending by as much as 26 billion guilders (\$13.7 billion) over the next four years. This includes five billion guilders (\$2.6 billion) already earmarked for cuts by the outgoing Christian Democrat-Labour coalition.

The CEC wants big savings in disability benefits, leading to tax cuts which would help create 150,000 new jobs by 1998.

Unemployment is the main economic headache in the Netherlands. Each month another 18,000 people join the dole queues. For every 100 people in work, there are 86 claiming benefits.

The CEC proposes tightening the criteria for those claiming disability benefit, stipulating that claimants must have been in work for at least five years.

It also wants to abolish sickness benefits, reduce unemployment benefits and lower state subsidies.

The cost-savings should, the CEC said, be given back to companies and individuals through lower taxes.

The plans, which echo the Liberals' campaign pledge to stem the generous benefits, threaten to isolate Labour and exert extreme pressure on the coalition talks.

While Labour, Liberals and D66 try to thrash out their differences behind closed doors, the Christian Democrats are keeping a low profile.

Set for opposition for the first time in more than 70 years, the dominant force in Dutch politics quietly anticipates a swift return to power should the coalition either fail to materialise or collapse in infancy.

The laborious, time-consuming process of forming a new government has been criticised by, among others, Labour's Home Affairs Minister Ed Van Thijn, as "the low point of democracy" because the electorate, having voted, has no real say in who governs.

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuters

LONDON — A victim of conflicting public demands, the United Nations is falling between two stools in its attempts to intervene in war-torn countries such as Bosnia, Somalia and now Rwanda, Western analysts say.

Under pressure to halt the bloodshed, U.N. "peacekeeping" troops have gone beyond simple humanitarian relief and ceasefire monitoring. But they have lacked the resources and the political will to step in decisively to end the conflicts by force.

In its latest peacekeeping effort, the Security Council on Monday authorised the dispatch of 5,500 troops to Rwanda — if it can raise them. The move reverses a decision to withdraw most of a 2,500-strong force after civil war intensified last month.

The troops are authorised to use force only in self-defence. But, in terms that recall U.N. action in Bosnia, the resolution proposes "secure humanitarian areas" which, it recognises, may have to be protected.

Diplomats at the U.N. are well aware that the proposed force is not going to stamp out the fighting in Rwanda. But the call for action of some sort, however inadequate, is typical of many conflicts that have erupted across the world in recent years.

Analysts say two factors have come together to pile onto the U.N. demands it cannot meet.

The end of the cold war has put paid to an era in which the stand-off between Washington and Moscow, both holding vetoes in the Security Council, ruled out intervention in most conflicts. Now the U.N. is expected to live up to its ideals.

At the same time, a communications revolution has brought to television screens across the world live and often very shocking pictures of atrocities that prompt public calls for action.

"The problem is that the major military powers now judge that in terms of public opinion they can only dispatch troops to fight when there is a clear national or



A DIFFICULT MISSION: German peacekeepers await the arrival of fellow soldiers deployed by the U.N. in Somalia (AFP photo)

'Crisis and expectations'

U.N. peacemaking seen falling between two stools

strategic interest," says former British ambassador to the U.N. Sir Anthony Parsons.

"The public is not prepared to swallow combat casualties. It is saying 'do something' — but not so much that it means body bags coming back to our own airports."

"With this emphasis on avoidance of casualties, the U.N. is inevitably having recourse to half measures and falling between two stools."

It is far cry from the end of the Gulf war in February 1991. Then, the rout of Iraqi invasion forces in Kuwait by

a U.S.-led multinational force raised hopes of a "new world order" in which aggression would be punished and wars suppressed.

Yet within months of the Gulf war, fighting had erupted in Yugoslavia that the world community proved powerless to stop.

Critically, Washington decided that the conflict did not involve U.S. national interests, one of several conditions laid down by President Bill Clinton last year for U.S. participation in U.N. peacekeeping. So no U.S. ground forces were sent.

European powers that did send troops drew an uneasy line between "peacekeeping" — monitoring a ceasefire declared by the warring parties — and what they considered the unrealistic task of "peace-making" or imposing a settlement by force.

But the threat, and briefly last month the use, of NATO air strikes to defend U.N.-declared "safe areas" in Bosnia blurred the line without resolving the conflict. Now some countries are threatening to go home if the combatants do not make peace.

The ill-fated U.N. intervention in Somalia to end famine caused by factional

fighting compounded the problem by underlining public intolerance of casualties.

The killing of 18 U.S. soldiers in Mogadishu last October destroyed support in U.S. Congress for further involvement and all American troops were withdrawn.

Even where U.N. troops have gone in with a more limited mandate to supervise elections things have later gone awry.

In Angola, the results of the poll in 1992 were rejected by the losing UNITA faction and the country relapsed into civil war. In Cambodia,

fighting has recently intensified between the government elected last year and Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

Many analysts say the U.N. is suffering from a "crisis of expectations" following the cold war.

"Idealism about the U.N.'s future role in international relations generated expectations which could not be met and, in the process, undermined the credibility of the organisation," says Mats Berdal of the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Whether a decisive U.N. intervention in one country, say Bosnia, would have stop-

ped other conflicts erupting is a matter of dispute but some analysts believe the failures have been contagious.

Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, they say, was inspired by the success of Bosnian Serb commander General Ratko Mladic in defying the U.N.

"Each warlord in turn has drawn comfort from the failure of the U.N. to deal effectively with the previous warlord," Mr. Parsons said.

"If I were a warlord now, I think I would say: If I can promise the international community casualties, they will stay out."

Amman Academy Fun Fair



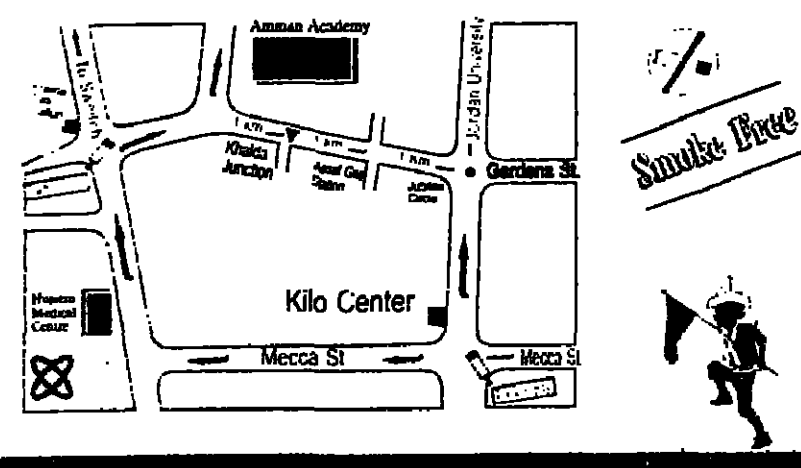
AMMAN ACADEMY

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Time: Friday 27th May 1994, 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

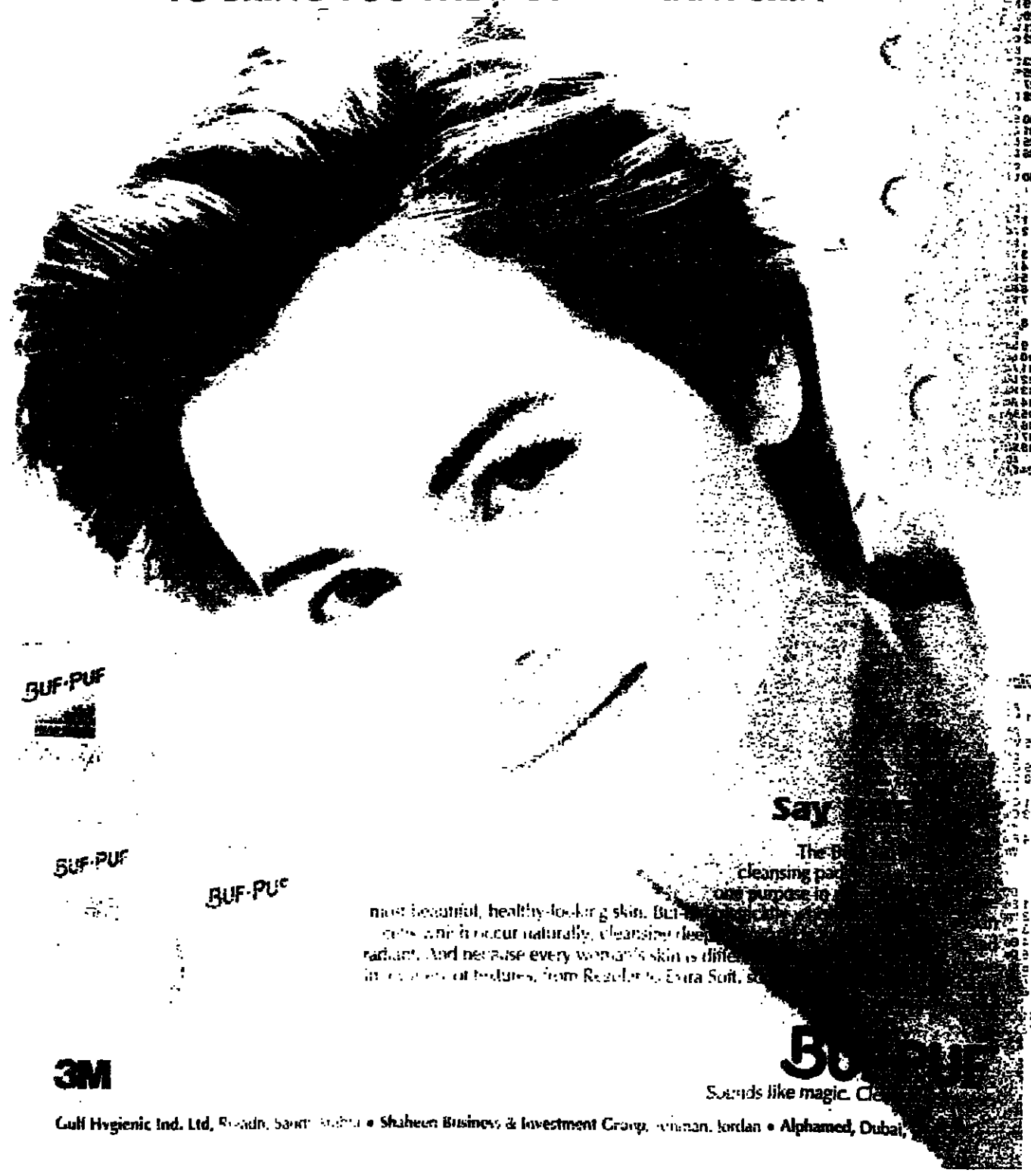
Place:
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U.N. says world ignores development at its own peril

LOAN Bank policy has been a central issue in the world's development debate. The U.N. chief has said that the world's development is at its own peril if it ignores the needs of the poor. He called for a "new culture" that would go beyond narrow economic principles and include peace, the environment, social justice and democracy as integral parts of development.

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali Wednesday warned that development was being ignored by the world's agencies, with dire consequences for stability and security in rich and poor countries alike.

He called for a "new culture" that would go beyond narrow economic principles and include peace, the environment, social justice and democracy as integral parts of development.

The U.N. chief unveiled a 51-page "Agenda for Development" in which he listed holistic guidelines rather than specific programmes in a quest to place the United Nations at the centre of development assistance.

"The concept of development — and decades of effort to reduce poverty, illiteracy, disease and mortality rates — are great achievements of this century," he said.

"But development as a common cause is in danger of fading from the forefront of our agenda," he said.

Progress is not inherent in the human condition. Retrogression is not inconceivable," he added.

The agenda will be the subject of hearings June 6-10, organised by General Assembly President Samuel Insanally.

Thereafter, Dr. Boutros-Ghali will make specific recommendations in time for the next assembly session in September.

The report is meant to be a counterpart for Dr. Boutros-Ghali's "Agenda for Peace," published in mid-1992, which stimulated debates on the future of peacekeeping.

The secretary-general has been the catalyst of many of the uncoordinated programmes within the U.N. structure. But he contended that only the United Nations was capable of leading and coordinating a new concept for development.

In practice, the U.N. Secretariat has not controlled large development grants or loans as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)



Boutros Boutros-Ghali

although U.N. agencies, have their own decision-making governing boards.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali said the U.N. Economic and Social Council, a major U.N. body with member states elected to coordinate policies of agencies, had abdicated its responsibility.

"Over the years, the absence of clear policy guidance from the General Assembly and the lack of effective policy coordination and control by the Economic and Social Council has resulted in an overall lack of cohesion and focus within the U.N. system," he said.

To ensure growth, Dr. Boutros-Ghali argued for "pragmatic policies" which take advantage of the efficiency of markets rather than rely on governments as "paramount economic agents."

But he said economic growth could only work if it promoted full employment, poverty reduction and improved patterns of income distribution.

In an apparent criticism of IMF policies, he said, that although structural adjustment was necessary, governments must be helped to cope with the human consequences of such reforms.

"Absolute poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy are the lot of one-fifth of the world's population," he said. "There can be no more urgent tasks for development than to attack both the causes and the symptoms of these ills."

Marks and Spencer rings up big rise in profits

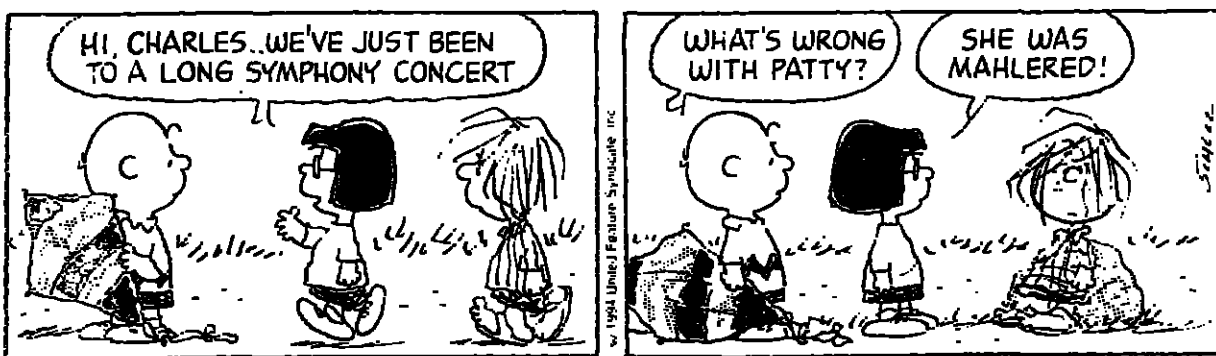
LONDON (R) — Marks and Spencer PLC, Britain's most profitable retailer, said Tuesday profits rose nearly 16 per cent last year as it pushed sales upwards in a tough trading environment by keeping prices down.

Pre-tax profits surged to a record £851.5 million (\$1.29 billion) on a 10 per cent increase in turnover to £6.54 billion (\$9.88 billion).

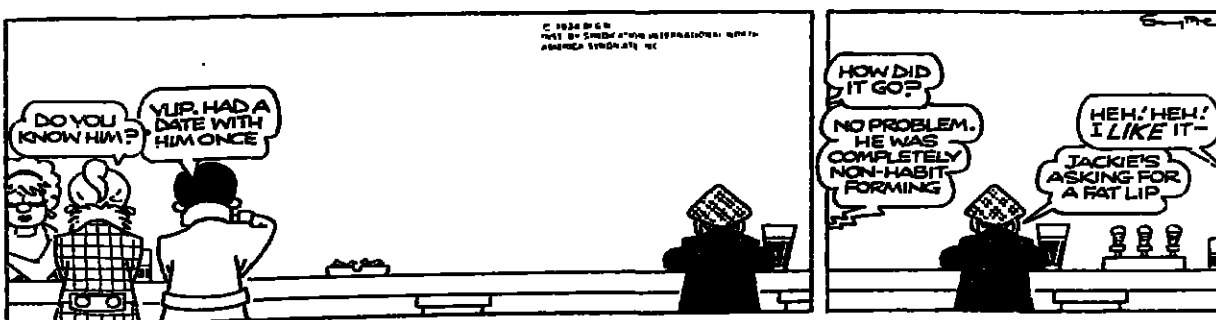
Earnings for the 53 weeks to end-March rose 16 per cent to 20.9 pence a share. The dividend rose by 13.6 per cent to 9.2 pence a share.

Chairman Richard Greenbury said the group achieved sales increases ahead of the national average and boosted market share, especially in clothing.

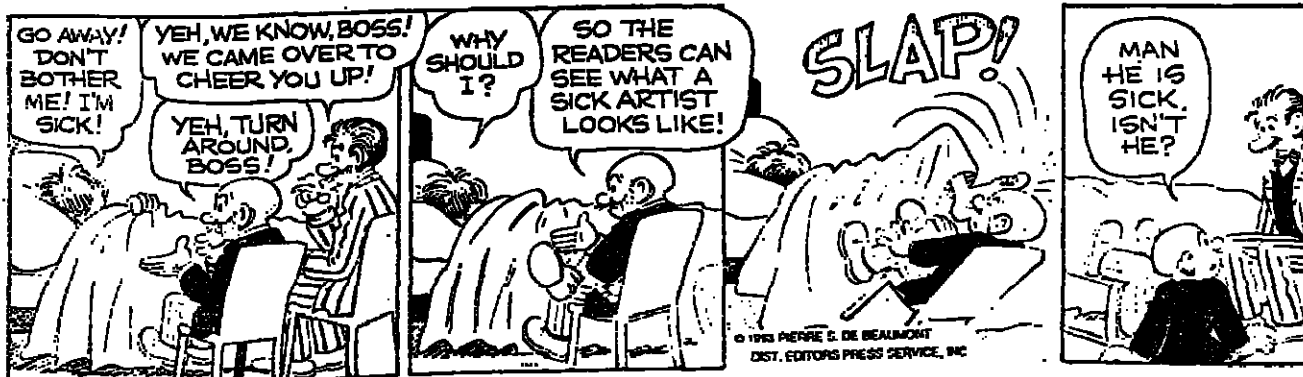
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



U.S. GATT critics spread nonsense, Sutherland says

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Members of the U.S. Congress who say the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) pact will violate U.S. sovereignty are spreading "absolute nonsense," GATT Director-General Peter Sutherland said Wednesday.

The 25,000-page agreement ending the Uruguay Round of GATT, which went to Congress last week, cuts tariffs and sets up a World Trade Organisation (WTO) to settle trade disputes.

Newt Gingrich, the House Republican whip, has compared the WTO to an "economic United Nations" where the United States "could be outvoted by Antigua, by Botswana, by Venezuela." National sovereignty itself could be threatened, he has said.

"That argument is absolute nonsense," Mr. Sutherland told reporters after addressing the Pacific Basin Economic Council. "By any stretch of the imagination, sovereignty is not at issue."

Mr. Sutherland, a former Irish attorney-general who has practised law in the United States, argued that critics have misconstrued the WTO as an instrument of world government.

He said the WTO would have no power to override the laws of nations. Instead, when parties to the accord have disputes, the WTO could authorise retaliation.

"It would be incomprehensible to me that the issue could be politicised in the U.S. Congress to the extent of undermining the most important trade agreement in history."

he said. "It would be an act of great folly to question the agreement."

In his speech, Mr. Sutherland, who is leaving GATT at year's end, expressed confidence the accord would be ratified in time for the WTO to start on the target date of Jan. 1. He praised President Bill Clinton for pushing the issue.

China, which like Russia and some 20 other nations is not a member of GATT, has been pushing to join the WTO as an founder member.

Calling China's inclusion a "top priority" Mr. Sutherland said talks were in a "decisive phase." Negotiations next month could determine whether China achieves its goal.

Among the issues preventing China's entry now, Mr. Sutherland said, are the transparency and uniformity of its laws, the function of state trading companies and tariffs.

Mr. Sutherland cautioned delegates to the conference against seeing regional trade agreements as an alternative to a global accord. He noted that such a view had been "firmly rejected here in South East Asia."

"This is an entirely misplaced view and could inevitably set the scene for trade conflicts of the most serious and politically dangerous kind," he said.

"Regionalism and multilateralism are not alternatives. They are not even merely complementary. A stable, rules-based multilateral trading system is not an adjunct to, but an absolute required precondition

for the healthy growth of regional trade, Mr. Sutherland explained.

Opposition to GATT, he said, is centred in "narrow but vocal and politically powerful lobbies unwilling to cope with change."

While the business community generally supports the accord, Mr. Sutherland said, business leaders should become more engaged in the debate or risk defeat at the hands of a "focused opposition."



Peter Sutherland

Dubai expects sharp rise in port activity

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — The southern Gulf emirate of Dubai expects a sharp rise in activity at its two main ports, already among the biggest 15 in the world, port authority chairman Sultan bin Salayem told newspapers.

The Rashid and Jebel Ali ports handled nearly 1.5 million containers in 1993. "Our plans for the next 10 years will focus on strategic investment to face the upturn in business as we expect 3.7 million containers to be handled in the year 2003," he said.

"We now have 18 cranes to handle containers and they will rise to 30 in 1998 and 34 in 2003."

Dubai, the second biggest member of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is the main transshipment centre in the region.

Britain's Serious Fraud Office cites lighter caseload

LONDON (R) — Britain's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) said Wednesday it was investigating or prosecuting 48 cases of alleged business and financial fraud involving £5 billion (\$7.5 billion), a drop in its legal caseload since 1993.

The SFO said the figures, released in its annual report, compared with 57 cases of alleged fraud the office was handling a year earlier that covered £6 billion (\$9 billion). It gave no explanation for the trend.

The SFO said of 23 criminal trials linked to alleged serious fraud that were concluded in the year ending April 1994, 32 of a total 54 defendants were convicted. One for more defendants were convicted in 20 out of 23 trials, it said.

The SFO dealt with more fraud on creditors of companies, on banks and on investors than a year earlier, while there were fewer cases of fraud

on pension funds, scams involving manipulating financial markets and fraud on government bodies.

George Staple, the director of the SFO, said in a news release that accompanied the report that public attention in Britain had focused in the last year on a relatively small number of high profile fraud cases.

The SFO, which was created in 1988 at the height of the economic boom in Britain, normally handles alleged fraud involving more than £5 million (\$7.5 million).

The annual report said the office had been criticised for the way it handled one of its most visible cases, the prosecution of Asil Nadir, the chairman and chief executive of the now-collapsed conglomerate, Polly Peck International.

Mr. Nadir's lawyers said the SFO used its wide-ranging powers in 1990 not only to launch

repeated raids on the businessman's home and office, but to seize confidential documents necessary to his future legal defence, then wrongfully make them available to parties who had no right to see them.

The SFO later admitted its staff had distributed a small number of privileged documents.

"That mistake had not been acknowledged when it should have been...the irregularity of legal professional privilege was the only significant complaint (against the SFO) on behalf of Mr. Nadir to be substantiated," the SFO's annual report said.

Mr. Nadir was arrested in 1990 and faced charges concerning his management of Polly Peck, but jumped bail in May 1993 and fled to his native northern Cyprus, saying he could not get a fair trial in Britain.

Italy puts top state insurer up for sale

ROME (R) — Italy put state insurer Istituto Nazionale per le Assicurazioni SPA (INA) up for sale Tuesday in the first privatisation under the free market government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

The sale will be one of the largest to date in Italy's privatisation drive and is sure to show the willingness of the media tycoon to dispose of state companies.

The treasury, which owns all of INA's stock, said it would sell up to 51 per cent of the company's four billion shares. It said the shares would be priced in a range of 2,200-2,700 lire, putting a value of up to 10.8 trillion lire (\$6.8 billion) on the whole of INA.

"The value the treasury has put on the company is low, as most people had been looking for about 12 trillion lire (\$7.5 billion)," one financial analyst said.

"They must have decided on a strong discount to ensure the sale goes through well and because the market is a bit overvalued at the moment," he added. The final price of the shares will be set before the offer opens on June 27.

The proceeds will raise as much as the sale of two of Italy's previous privatisations, former state banks Banca Commerciale Italiana SPA and Credito Italiano SPA.

Once it is privatised, INA will be one of the largest companies on the Italian market, where it is likely to be the second-largest insurer after Assicurazioni Generali SPA.

INA's shares are due to be listed on Milan Bourse and are also expected to be traded in New York.

One quarter to 37.5 per cent of INA's capital will be offered to members of the Italian public with the rest going to professional investors.

Tight limits were set on how much buyers can own to avoid INA falling into the hands of big financial groups.

Members of the public will be limited to buying an initial 0.5 per cent and the professional investors — pension funds and insurance companies — will have a two per cent maximum.

The treasury said that single buyers, groups or "subjects linked in controlling shareholding syndicates in third parties" would not be able to own more than five per cent by subsequently buying up stock on the bourse.

Analysts said that measure would help avoid a repetition of the controversy that erupted after the sale of Banca Commerciale and Credito Italiano, when allies of the secretive merchant bank Mediobanca

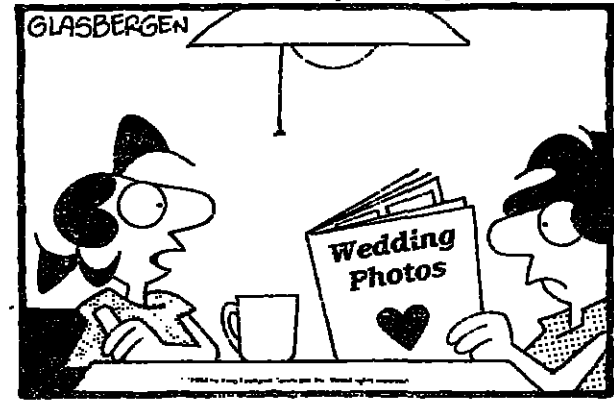
SPA gained effective control of the two banks.

Mediobanca, controlled by Italy's Milan-based industrial establishment, drew sharp criticism from members of Berlusconi's government who have vowed to ensure companies sold off in future retain a diffuse shareholder base.

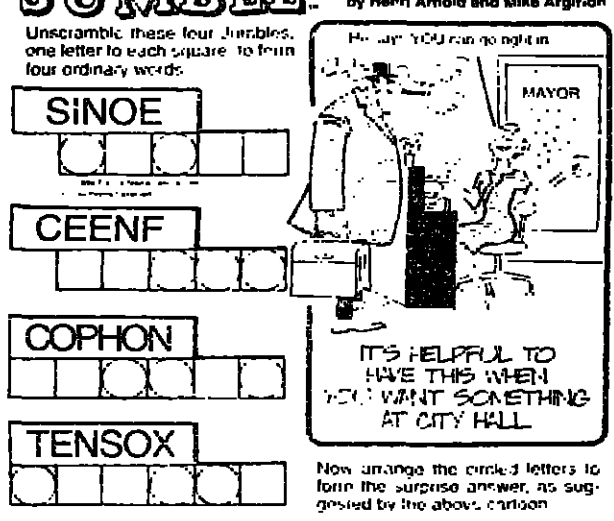
Getting INA's privatisation approved was a race against the clock for Berlusconi's government, sworn in only two weeks ago after his "Freedom Alliance" won general elections in March.

Shortly after winning a final vote of confidence in parliament last Friday, Berlusconi's cabinet sat late into the night to finalise the details of INA's sale. Had Tuesday's deadline for a special shareholders' meeting not been met, the sale would have been delayed to October.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

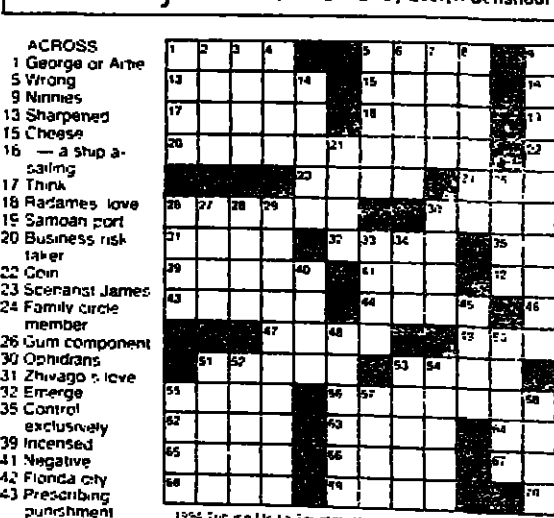


JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



Answer here: SINOE, CEENF, COPEN, TENSOX. Yesterday's Jumble: FERTILE, GUILTY, GREEN, SCHEME. Answer: What you must call the director of the White House: A STAB IN THE BACK.

THE Daily Crossword by Evelyn Benshoof



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved: Across: 1. GEORGE, 2. ARNE, 3. INDIGO, 4. PROCEED, 5. FASH AWAY, 6. COMPLETE, 7. HARASS, 8. HARASS, 9. WORM, 10. JAIL, 11. PATRIOTIC, 12. TRENCH, 13. SHARPENER, 14. TRANSFER, 15. CHEESE, 16. SHIP, 17. THINK, 18. RADAMES, 19. SAMBA, 20. BUSINESS, 21. TAKE, 22. COW, 23. SCANDAL, 24. FAMILY, 25. MEMBER, 26. GUM, 27. COMPONENT, 28. TRENCH, 29. TRENCH, 30. OMNISCIENT, 31. ZHIGUO, 32. EMERGENCE, 33. CONTROL, 34. EXCLUSIVELY, 35. INCENSED, 36. NEGATIVE, 37. FLORIDA, 38. PUNISHMENT, 39. STRETCHING, 40. LAB, 41. GEL, 42. BOAST, 43. PURITAN, 44. PAINTER, 45. LET'S, 46. TRUANT, 47. ASLEEP, 48. SON, 49. BED, 50. PAY, 51. POEMS, 52. COOL, 53. COMPLETE, 54. SERENADER, 55. SLY, 56. FECUND, 57. PLANTATION, 58. PORT, 59. INDIAN, 60. INDIGO, 61. PROCEED, 62. FASH AWAY, 63. COMPLETE, 64. HARASS, 65. HARASS, 66. WORM, 67. JAIL, 68. PATRIOTIC, 69. TRENCH, 70. TRENCH, 71. TRENCH, 72. TRENCH.

مكة من الأصل

Commodity prices take breather

LONDON (R) — Commodity markets drew breath Wednesday as prices weakened across the board in what analysts described as a healthy reaction to their recent dizzy climb.

But investors were likely to shake off jitters and stage fresh attempts to push markets to new highs in coming weeks, analysts said.

"A strong U.S. economy is fueling consumption, crops are poor in several countries, the outlook hasn't changed and prices will continue to climb these markets," a trader said.

Rains in U.S. grain-growing areas doused the commodity price rally on Tuesday, prompting speculators to sell Chicago grain futures and other markets.

The selling led to a sharp fall in U.S. Commodity Research Bureau index futures, and sparked a chain reaction of declines in the basket of markets from which it is compiled.

Coffee and cocoa prices fell precipitously from seven- and six-year highs on Wednesday as investors cashed in profits.

"It's clear the scope for commodity prices to rise is being bearing in mind where they are coming from," said And Smith, analyst at Union Bank of Switzerland. "But this has been a low interest rate, speculation-driven rally which has hastened price rises normally seen later in the economic cycle."

Commodity prices have climbed from very depressed levels and only last year most were languishing at their lowest for years.

But strong U.S. consumption and signs of recovery in other industrial economies, coupled with poor crops in some commodities, have fueled considerable gains.

Buying by hedge funds and other private speculators has brought forward price rises likely later this year. They have seen commodity markets as a chance to make money at a time when bond and share markets are looking shaky.

A further twist to the upward spiral has come from industry buying to rebuild inventories now they believe low prices to be a thing of the past.

Economics, not talks, seen boosting Japan imports

TOKYO (R) — U.S. and Japanese politicians are congratulating themselves for agreeing to resume stalled trade talks, but economists say the real work of boosting imports to Japan is moving ahead, regardless of government efforts.

"Consumers are already voting with their feet and there is a shift by Japanese manufacturers and retailers to increase overseas sourcing," said Geoffrey Barker, chief economist at Baring Securities (Japan).

"That's what will bring down the surplus."

"That change, combined with a cyclical recovery in Japan, is worth any number of trade agreements," Mr. Barker added.

Washington and Tokyo said Tuesday they had agreed to end a three-month hiatus in their economic framework talks and swiftly return to the table in search of a new economic deal.

The overall aim of such a deal remains the same as when the original pact was signed in July 1983 — to cut Japan's mammoth trade surplus and increase imports.

Creating a new pact is likely to be tough, given continued differences between the two sides, but many economists say market forces are likely to achieve the goal anyway.

The forces that created a protected economy have

broken down and are putting structural pressure on Japan, allowing market forces to do the work," said Paul Summerville, head of Asian research at Lehman Brothers Japan.

Support for that view comes from many sources, from the aides of convenience stores to government trade statistics.

Convenience chain store operator FamilyMart Co. Ltd. is expanding sales of low-cost brands among them imported U.S.-made Cola to sell for a mere 68 yen per can, compared with the 106 yen price tag on locally produced Cola.

Foreign car imports, including many made at Japanese firms' overseas plants, are also soaring. Boosted partly by the strong yen and price cuts, imported vehicle sales jumped 13.9 per cent to a record 217,633 in the year ended March 31.

Japan's trade surplus is still growing in dollar terms after touching a record \$121.99 billion in 1993/94, but part of the rise has been due to the impact of the strong Japanese currency, which inflated the dollar value of exports. Measured in yen, the 1993/94 surplus fell slightly.

Import volume, meanwhile, is surging. In April alone, import volume jumped 10.3 per cent compared with April 1993.

Behind the anecdotes and the numbers are structural changes triggered by the strong yen and a three-year recession after the heady days of the late 1980s "bubble economy."

Japanese consumers and corporations are becoming more sensitive to price as the decisive factor in buying. Further, a new group of Japanese firms want to promote deregulation, streamline the Byzantine distribution system and profit from altered consumer attitudes.

"There is a new constituency of Japanese companies trying to accelerate the U.S. agenda in Japan," Mr. Summerville said. "They're doing more to drive the American agenda than America."

Other economists warn, however, that foreign firms might not be the main beneficiaries of the revolution in attitudes toward prices and a streamlined distribution system.

"A lot of Japanese firms are making products to sell in that (slimmer) distribution system and many of the imports are Japanese products made elsewhere in Asia," said Kenneth Courtis, chief economist at Deutsche Bank Group in Tokyo.

"It is not altogether obvious that streamlining distribution means more manufactured imports or that the U.S. will necessarily benefit," he added.

Iran to pay billions in subsidies this year

NIROGIA (R) — Iran will pay subsidies on some staples and aid to benefit the needy including surgery for wounded soldiers and rural health services, the Iranian news agency IRNA said Tuesday.

It quoted an official budget report as saying Iran will pay total subsidies of 8.2 trillion rials (\$1.5 billion) in those categories in the year started March 21.

IRNA said more than \$1.7 billion will subsidize staples and about \$300 million will go to medicines and the foreign medical groups.

Subsidies to aid the elderly in rural areas will reach \$4 million, IRNA said.

Iran has a growing and differentiating income gap, with some medical groups and rural health services, IRNA said.

Other subsidies include the Red Crescent and provision of war with war victims.

The figure does not include fuel subsidies.

The figure also includes paying subsidies to the military and the police.

Israeli peace dividend has dark side—inflation

TEL AVIV (R) — It was the stuff Israeli dreams were made of: Peace with the Palestinians and mass Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union.

But the dividend has a dark side that is giving Israel's watchdog central bank no rest — inflation.

Running at 13.5 per cent, the benchmark consumer price index is outstripping government forecasts of eight per cent inflation in 1994.

The Bank of Israel, releasing Wednesday its annual report on the state of the economy, attributed much of the rise to housing prices climbing at an annual rate of 35 per cent on the back of peace and immigration.

It said the agreement on Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho fuelled speculation that "some of the Jewish settlers will return to Israel, boosting demand for new apartments already in short supply and driving up prices."

The bank said that was causing Israelis to rush to buy new homes, driving up prices even more.

Many had said they would match her asking price of \$160,000.

But her offer for a bigger house has been put on hold, because "the owner says he has so many offers he is going to 'auction' it off," she said.

continuous flood of immigrants.

Between 1990 and 1993, some 500,000 Jews arrived from the former Soviet Union. Now settled in — their unemployment rate fell to 20 per cent last year from 50 per cent in 1990 — they are eager buyers buoyed by attractive mortgage rates.

Prices have shot up in a seller's market. A three bedroom house in a suburb near Jerusalem sold for about \$235,000 in January, 1993. It now goes for about \$315,000.

Traditionally, as a hedge against inflation that 10 years ago hit 400 per cent, housing prices in Israel have been denominated in U.S. dollars.

The owner of a three-bedroom flat in Bat Yam, a working class town near Tel Aviv, said dozens of buyers had tracked through the apartment in the week she had advertised it.

Many had said they would match her asking price of \$160,000.

But her offer for a bigger house has been put on hold, because "the owner says he has so many offers he is going to 'auction' it off," she said.

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, presenting the bank's report for 1993, said: "An analysis of the (housing) problem shows there are three main bottlenecks in the supply of accommodations: Availability of land, the pace of construction, and manpower."

He called on the government to release more state-owned land to private contractors who would be obligated contractually to begin and end construction at set dates to stop them from holding on to the tracts until prices rise further.

Mr. Frenkel also proposed a temporary increase in the import of foreign construction workers, noting that closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip keep 30,000 Palestinian labourers from reaching building sites in Israel.

But Mr. Frenkel cautioned the government against directly building cheap housing.

"Past experience shows this is wasteful and ineffective," he said.

The cabinet is due to meet Sunday to consider a treasury and housing ministry proposal to free up land for construction.

Moscow drafts new regulations to tighten tax noose on foreigners

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's finance ministry and the tax authority are drafting new regulations to tighten tax on foreigners, officials said.

Officials said the government was losing potential revenues because of tax cheating by foreign firms.

Foreign companies would be required to routinely submit data on their expatriate employees and their salaries.

The top Russian income tax bracket is 30 per cent and applies to annual earnings of more than 10 million rubles (\$5,300).

The current regulatory chaos of Russia means that Western consultancy firms, and not the government, are effectively acting as tax police for many foreign firms on behalf of the state.

In Soviet days, foreigners could change dollars at soaring black market rates and help reduce their taxable burden.

But lately, the rouble has become a more or less stable currency. In 1993, its depreciation against the dollar of some 300 per cent lagged behind inflation of 1,000 per cent.

The measures are the latest in a series of new tax rulings by the government in recent months.

A 23 per cent tax on foreign capital investments in Russia, floated by tax officials last month, is putting at risk hundreds of millions of dollars in potential investment, bankers said.

Development aid suffers from cutbacks

GENEVA (AFP) — Development aid is suffering because rich countries are cutting back on spending and diverting funds instead to emergency relief, according to an international report.

The report, entitled "The Reality of Aid 94," some 100 non-governmental organisations noted that most members of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) would be cutting back on aid to developing countries this year.

The reality of aid in 1994 is depressing, the report said.

Only four OECD members — Japan, which currently pro-

vides 20 per cent of development aid, Denmark, Ireland and New Zealand — have budgeted for an increase in aid, the report said.

This drop in funding was all the more serious as in 1992 only the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway had met a U.N. target which calls for industrialised countries to contribute 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) to development aid.

The report also criticised the lack of commitment by OECD countries to fighting poverty,

despite numerous declarations of intent to do so.

In 1992, donor countries contributed \$60.4 billion in development aid, but only some 10 per cent of this actually went to help fight poverty according to the report.

"DAC members (donor countries) still appear to see economic adjustment and governance reforms as being the essentials of development. It is as if the alleviation of poverty is a bonus which is sure to follow," the report said.

Commercial considerations

also seem to weigh heavily in donor decisions, the report said.

The report said that the U.N. target of 0.7 per cent of GDP for development aid has been missed by all but a handful of countries.

Europe and the International Labour Office (ILO) are among the agencies that have been criticised for not doing enough to help poor countries.

The report also criticised the lack of commitment by OECD countries to fighting poverty,

Financial Markets

in cooperation with Cairo Amman Bank

Exchange Rate Interest Rates Date: 19/5/1994

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.1365	4.3855	4.6900	5.2582
Sterling Pound	4.8185	4.9550	5.1320	5.5600
Deutsche Mark	3.6000	4.8160	4.7500	4.7500
Swiss Franc	3.8100	3.7500	3.7500	3.7500
French Franc	5.4400	5.2500	5.2500	5.2500
Japanese Yen	1.8820	1.9400	2.0000	2.1000
European Currency Unit	5.6850	5.5000	5.5000	5.5000

Interest rate for deposits exceeding 100,000 J.O.D. or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 19/5/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6980	0.7000
Sterling Pound	1.0515	1.0575
Deutsche Mark	2.4210	2.4232
Swiss Franc	2.4647	2.4975
French Franc	2.1231	2.1532
Japanese Yen	0.6735	0.6766
Dutch Guilder	0.3751	0.3770
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0441	0.0442
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

For info

Other Currencies Date: 19/5/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahrian Dinar	1.8350	1.8480
Lebanese Lira	0.242455	0.242525
Saudi Riyal	0.1658	0.1667
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3270	2.3630
Qatari Riyal	0.1885	0.1965
Qatari Pound	0.2675	0.2750
Omani Riyal	1.7830	1.8295
UAE Dirham	0.1895	0.1955

For info

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and Bullion markets Wednesday.

	U.S. \$100 costs		
	1.4722-62	Canadian dollar	
	1.6524-38	Deutchmarks	
	1.8530-49	Dutch guilders	
	1.4110-20	Swiss francs	
	24.01-65	Belgian francs	
	6.6800-05	French francs	
	1804.6-0.1	Italian lire	
	192.58-05	Japanese yen	
	7.7675-78	Swedish crown	
	7.1590-50	Norwegian crown	
	6.4720-70	Danish crown	
One sterling	\$1.5056-76		
One ounce of gold	\$395.10-38-60		

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U.N. envoy leaves Rwandan capital for peace talks as fighting rages

KIGALI (R) — U.N. envoy Iqbal Riza left U.N. headquarters in Kigali for peace talks with Rwanda's interim government Wednesday after a two-hour delay because of fighting on the route.

A 20-vehicle U.N. convoy, including an armoured troop carrier with Riza aboard, left for the government's seat near the town of Gitarama, 40 kilometres southwest of Kigali, after rebels assured the U.N. they would allow it to pass.

The departure was delayed for two hours and 10 minutes by fighting between government troops and Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels at "sniper's valley" just south of the capital, U.N. officials said.

Mr. Riza, the deputy head of U.N. peacekeeping operations, is on a mission to win government and rebel approval to clear the way for 5,500 U.N. peacekeepers to move into the blood-soaked country.

U.N. officials said he would meet the president and prime minister of the government, which consists of members of Rwanda's Hutu majority who declared themselves in power after the killing of President Juvénal Habyarimana on April 6.

The interim government fled to a civil servants' training college near Gitarama days after the start of renewed civil war between the government and rebels and mass slaughter fol-

lowing the president's death in a rocket attack on his plane.

Earlier Wednesday, shells hit an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital compound in the Rwandan capital of Kigali, killing two Rwandan staff, U.N. officials said.

They said two shells slammed into the compound of the hospital next to the ICRC headquarters in the government-held city centre facing frontlines held by the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF).

The RPF has continued to shell the city centre despite the extension of a truce until Wednesday evening during Mr. Riza's visit.

"Riza is trying to bring peace to this damned place but how are we supposed to believe it will work when they can't even stop the fighting during his meetings?" said an aid official.

"The government wants him to work because they are losing. But the rebels appear to be only acting polite by seeing him as they are really focusing purely on military victory," he added.

After two hours of talks with the army chief of staff, Mr. Riza said Tuesday the rebels and government troops had agreed to a political rather than military solution to end their civil war and mass slaughter fol-

To reach the venue of those talks, at the abandoned Hotel Des Diplomates in Kigali's heart, Mr. Riza's U.N. convoy had to run a gauntlet of mortar fire.

The envoy is trying to clear the way for 5,500 U.N. peacekeepers to deploy in the central African state, torn apart by seven weeks of war and massacres.

Ghana, Ethiopia and Senegal have committed troops to stem the horror in Rwanda but the United Nations is falling far short of the 5,500 peacekeepers it wants.

While several other nations have indicated willingness to supply troops as well as logistics — among them Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Italy and Australia — a U.N. spokesman said firm commitments were still missing.

Over a million displaced people are in desperate need of relief aid.

Aid officials estimate over 500,000 people have perished in Rwanda's "killing fields" across the country — most were members of the Tutsi minority slaughtered by the Hutu majority.

"To provide for perhaps 40,000 refugees in Kigali we have at the moment 15 tonnes of maize and 90 cartons of biscuits," said a U.N. aid official. "It's pathetic but every time we try to get something else from the warehouses we

are attacked.

"All road routes are blocked so we will have to rely on an airlift as soon as it gets going. People are dying all the time but we are powerless to do anything to help them," he added.

"The depth of hatred between the communities in Rwanda is something I have never seen before. They just want each other dead — it makes Somalia look like a friendly place," he said.

Meanwhile, a C-130 Hercules plane which shuttles between Nairobi and Kigali for the United Nations was shot at and hit when it took off from Kigali Airport Tuesday, the United Nations said.

One bullet struck one of the aircraft's engines. The damage was not noticed until arrival back in Nairobi and no-one was injured in the incident, but all flights into Kigali Wednesday have now been cancelled.

It was not clear whether the rebels or government forces fired at the plane. The RPF captured the airport last weekend.

Mr. Riza had flown in on the plane, known as Canada-1.

He will not fly out of Kigali after Wednesday's scheduled talks with the government in Gitarama.

Instead he will drive north to Mulindi for talks with the RPF leader Major-General Paul Kagame.



Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev (left) and his Spanish counterpart Julian Garcia Vargas confer during the meeting of Gen. Grachev with the NATO defence ministers Wednesday (AFP photo)

Russia wants security forum with NATO

BRUSSELS (R) — Russia said Wednesday it wanted to set up special ties with NATO through which the two sides could discuss European and global security problems.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev told a meeting of his counterparts from NATO, Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics that Moscow wanted to set up an "active mechanism" with NATO that would go beyond military cooperation in the partnership for peace scheme.

"We are suggesting creating... an active mechanism for mutual consultations on all kinds of problems of European and global security," Gen. Grachev told the meeting.

These consultations would work on a regular basis, not only when there was a crisis, he said, and would bring together experts as well as top military officials and political leaders.

Russia reaffirmed Wednesday that it would sign NATO's partnership for peace without setting conditions but said it wanted to sign a separate deal with the alliance on issues such as control of nuclear weapons.

"We are not setting any pre-

conditions for joining the partnership," Gen. Grachev told reporters after meeting U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry at NATO Headquarters for more than an hour.

"It wouldn't be correct for Russia to set forth some specific conditions for cooperation or trying to say that we want to occupy a better place, a so-called warmer place under the sun, in the programme," Gen. Grachev said.

Mr. Perry and other NATO ministers welcomed the Russian commitment to join the partnership, which provides for closer military links between the West and its former cold war foes.

Russia's commitment to sign the partnership scheme, although no date has been set, represents a major boost for NATO which launched the programme at the beginning of this year. Eighteen countries have already signed.

Moscow, which has disagreed with NATO policy over Bosnia and on some other issues, postponed signing the partnership last month and said it wanted the alliance to recognise formally its status as

a major world power.

Those demands had worried both NATO and Moscow's former satellites in Eastern Europe, who feared they would be shut out of a secret relationship between Russia and the alliance.

"We are very pleased that he announced the unconditional decision for joining the partnership for peace," Mr. Perry said.

The barrel-chested Grachev, wearing a dark blue suit instead of his general's uniform, said he would present Russia's proposals on a broader relationship at Wednesday's meeting of NATO defence ministers with their counterparts from Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics.

"The Russian programme is simply a broader cooperation with more events and more details... We have some provisions for cooperation which are specific only for Russia and only for some of the partners for cooperation," Gen. Grachev said.

This could take the form of a protocol or agreement to be signed by NATO and Russia.

Gen. Rose warns Bosnia Muslims they can't win war

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnia's rival leaders prepared Wednesday to open talks on ending their two-year war as the U.N. commander in the former Yugoslav republic warned the Muslims they had no hope of winning a decisive victory.

His warning coincided with reports that Bosnian Croats were helping their Muslim allies on the battlefield, something which could encourage the Muslim-led government army to step up the fight to regain territory lost to Bosnian Serbs.

Representatives of the Bosnian government, and of Bosnian Serbs and Croats, gathered in the French lake-side resort of Talloires for talks with international mediators on the country's future ethnic division.

Sources close to the so-called "contact group" said talks had already begun with individual delegations but there were no immediate plans for face-to-face negotiations between the warring parties, their first since February.

Diplomats in France said the contact group would present the participants with a new map of Bosnia giving Serbs 49 per cent, compared to the 70 per cent they now hold, and 51 per cent to a new Muslim-Croat federation.

On the eve of the talks, Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic rejected a previous offer of a 51-49 split as unacceptable, and threatened to fight on unless offered more.

However the commander of U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia,

General Sir Michael Rose, warned a local Bosnian army commander Tuesday the Muslims had no chance of inflicting a decisive blow, even if the arms embargo on former Yugoslavia was lifted.

"If all the blocks were lifted, it would take years for you to achieve a strategic balance with the enemy," Gen. Rose told Brigadier-General Mehmet Alagic, as witnessed by a Reuters correspondent.

"It's not a question of just buying equipment, but in putting the whole operation together," Gen. Rose told Gen. Alagic, commander of a Bosnian Army Corps, during a visit to Travnik in central Bosnia.

Gen. Alagic countered that his forces had been underestimated before and given little chance of defending Sarajevo: "The world's impression was we wouldn't be able to survive."

Gen. Alagic said now that Croats and Muslims had stopped fighting since forming a new alliance and Bosnian Federation earlier this year, the Bosnian army could concentrate its energies on fighting the heavily-armed Serbs.

Some U.N. military officers and Western analysts say the future course of the war could depend on how willing the Croats were to actively assist the Muslims against the Serbs.

On Tuesday the U.N. reported that Bosnian army and Croat tanks were attacking Serb positions near Tesanj in a joint attack that marked the first time the Croat militia had fought alongside Muslim forces

in central Bosnia for more than a year.

Military observers also reported that Serb forces in the northern Bosnian town of Brcko came under artillery fire from Croatia across the border this week.

Croats could tip the balance at Brcko if they launched serious attacks against the Serbs, who are squeezed in a narrow corridor that is a vital supply line to Serb-held land in Croatia and Bosnia, military analysts say.

The Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, reported Wednesday that Croat forces had launched a mortar and heavy machinegun attack on Serb positions in Lijeskovac, near Brcko, during the night.

The agency also reported that one member of a seven-man Croat sabotage unit trying to infiltrate the Brcko area had been killed and another wounded.

The commander of the Bosnian Serb Army's (BSA) East Bosnia Corps, General Novak Simic, told BSA Radio Wednesday they expected a Muslim offensive to begin around Brcko by the end of the month.

"We are awaiting their major onslaught and after it is officially reported, we will do our job and make sure we widen the corridor," he said.

Bosnian Serbs apparently fired on a bus being escorted by U.N. peacekeepers Tuesday, killing a woman and wounding another passenger in the second violation of Sarajevo's truce in two days.

U.N. officials had

announced earlier in the day that two Serb tanks trespassed in the NATO-imposed heavy weapons exclusion zone and shelled troops of Bosnia's Muslim-led government.

Meanwhile, Italian Defence Minister Cesare Previti said Wednesday Italy wants a more prominent role in the Bosnia peace process.

He said any intervention by Italian forces in the former Yugoslav republic would require a peace deal, acceptance of Italian troops by the warring Bosnian Croat, Serbs and Muslims and a formal request by the United Nations.

"To this must be added a greater consideration of our role in the peace process," Mr. Previti told state radio from Brussels.

His comments illustrated the more vigorous approach to foreign policy adopted by the new conservative cabinet of media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi.

Foreign Minister Antonio Martino said Tuesday Italy's exclusion from a five-member "contact group" coordinating peace efforts in ex-Yugoslavia was not acceptable.

"I will state clearly that our country should be part of it," Mr. Martino said from Washington, where he met U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The group is made up of five senior officials from the United States, Russia, France, Germany and Britain. Many of the NATO forces enforcing a no-fly ban and close air support over Bosnia are located in Italian bases.

Major, Reynolds to meet on N. Ireland

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counterpart Albert Reynolds are to meet in London Thursday to review the faltering progress of their Northern Ireland peace initiative.

British officials said Wednesday.

The GMTs, confirming the 1600 GMT meeting at Mr. Major's Downing Street residence, said the two would take the opportunity to meet while Mr. Reynolds is in England to make a speech to the Oxford Union Debating Society.

Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Major agreed joint peace declaration in December which they said offered the best chance for peace in 25 years of conflict in Northern Ireland, from which Irish Republican guerrillas are trying to oust Britain.

It sought to allay the fears of the Protestant majority, which wishes to stay part of Britain, and the Catholic minority which largely aspires to Irish unity.

But the guerrillas have since

filled the political vacuum in the province, killing five people in the past week. Thirty-two people have died in the conflict this year.

Irish government sources said Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Major would devote much of their meeting to launching a new round of inter-party talks involving Dublin, London and the province's political parties.

The two governments have been exchanging documents on a "new framework" to put political proposals onto the diplomatic principles of the Downing Street document for some time, the sources said.

Such discussions would not exclude the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein, providing it abided by the Downing Street Declaration and renounced violence and got the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to end its war against British rule.

They could also eventually involve the IRA's Protestant rivals providing there was a clear sign that the 25-year conflict had been removed from

the streets of Belfast and elsewhere.

Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew said the two governments were working on the new framework earlier this year and the sources said it was a delicate, long-term operation that would require careful coordination.

They recalled that the Downing Street declaration itself was the product of months of drafting and redrafting before it was made public as the best opportunity for peace in years.

It is unlikely to be published until some time after the European elections and maybe not until early July, said one source familiar with the discussions.

They said the framework would be made public even if Sinn Fein continue to "prevaricate" on the Downing Street text and despite grumbling from Northern Ireland's political leaders about a process involving the Dublin government.

NEWS IN BRIEF

French parliament drops nuclear debate

PARIS (R) — In a victory for Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, France's centre-right coalition government has dropped plans to force a vote in parliament on the sticky question of whether to resume nuclear testing. A National Assembly (lower house) member who had been pushing for a vote on new tests no longer planned to pursue the vote, Defence Minister Francois Leotard said Thursday. "The proposal would make it (the question of testing) a regulatory matter," Mr. Leotard told France Inter Radio. "But this is a matter that should be left to the executive branch to decide."

Nuclear tests have been a delicate issue in power sharing between Mr. Mitterrand and the ruling coalition government which came to power 14 months ago. The president said earlier this month that France would not resume nuclear testing halted two years ago, during his remaining year in office, and predicted world opinion would prevent successors from ordering fresh tests.

Quake rocks Indonesia's Irian Jaya

JAKARTA (R) — An earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter Scale hit the remote province of Irian Jaya Wednesday, damaging buildings and houses in Indonesia's half of New Guinea Island. Antara News Agency said. The agency quoted the local district chief in Nabire as saying that despite the damage there had so far been no reports of casualties. It said the earthquake erupted some 30 kilometres below the surface off Irian Jaya's northern coast at about 1 p.m. local time (0400 GMT). The Australian Seismological Centre in Canberra earlier said the quake struck in a mountainous area about 650 kilometres west-southwest of Jayapura, capital of Irian Jaya. But officials confirmed the quake erupted at sea in Cenderawasih Bay.

Thai launch hunt for missing couple

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai police scoured the border with Cambodia Wednesday in search of two foreigners, one a U.N. worker, who went missing on a sightseeing trip to a temple under the control of the Khmer Rouge. The Belgian embassy in Bangkok identified the missing man as Michel Baran and said the woman who disappeared with him was also believed to be Belgian, although her name was not known. Mr. Baran works for the Bangkok-based U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, or ESCAP, an embassy official said.

Flesh-eating bacterium claims more victims

LONDON (R) — British doctors said Wednesday they were checking reports that as many as nine people had died from a virulent version of a common bacterium that dissolves fat and muscle, quickly killing many of its victims.

They urged calm after sensational media coverage of the outbreak, in which at least seven have died this year. About 10 people usually die from the infection per year in Britain.

"There's a lot of scaremongering. Everybody's who's got a sore throat thinks they've got it," said a spokesman for the government Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS).

He said the agency was trying to decide how to coordinate checks on the outbreak of streptococcus infection. Hospitals across Britain have been reporting cases after a cluster, or mini-epidemic, was reported in Gloucestershire, western England.

Doctors said a 57-year-old man and a woman in her 60s had died at a hospital in Winchester, southern England Wednesday and officials at another hospital in southern England confirmed a 58-year-old woman died last month.

Health officials urged the public to keep calm, explaining that anyone with the infection would be very ill with fever, diarrhoea, skin blistering and other clear symptoms.

British media have given

lurid coverage to news of the outbreak. "Killer bug ate my face" was the front-page headline in the tabloid Star newspaper, which interviewed a man who needed skin grafts after surviving an attack by the bacteria.

The Dutch National Health and Environmental Protection Agency said a study revealed 21 people had died of the infection in the Netherlands since 1992.

"The number of cases is very low and spread around the country. This is not an epidemic situation," a spokeswoman for the agency said.

Norwegian doctors who fought an outbreak in 1988 said the bacteria seemed to use a "slime capsule" to evade the body's natural defences.

In Bonn, Health Minister Horst Seehofer demanded a quick report from the National Health Agency on whether any cases of the flesh-eating bacteria were known in Germany.

Officials in New Zealand said they had also recently treated patients with the disease.

Diana Martin of the New Zealand Communicable Diseases Centre said it was important not to get things out of proportion.

Streptococcus, which caused childhood fever, scarlet fever and rheumatic fever in the past and which killed mumps creator Jim Henson in 1990, can mutate quickly into virulent forms.

Republican wins election in Kentucky

NEW YORK (AP) — A conservative Republican won a special election for the seat of the late Rep. William H. Natcher Tuesday in a Kentucky district that has sent Democrats to Congress for the last 129 years.

It was the second such victory for the Republicans this year. In a special election earlier this month in Oklahoma, voters picked Republican Frank Lucas to fill the seat of

retiring Democrat Glenn English.

In other primary voting Tuesday, two figures from the Whitewater scandal were on the ballot in Arkansas. And in Idaho, Attorney General Larry Echohawk won the Democratic nomination in his bid to become the nation's first Indian governor. His opponent for November is former Lieutenant Governor Phil

Batt, who defeated three other candidates.

In Kentucky's 2nd district, with 75 per cent of precincts reporting, Ron Lewis, a minister and owner of a fundamentalist Christian bookstore, had 31,242 votes, or 55 per cent, and Joe Frather, a former state legislator and former state Democratic chairman, had 25,720, or 45 per cent.

S. Africa takes seat at U.N. conference

TOKYO (Agencies) — South African representatives took their seats alongside other U.N. members at a Yokohama conference Wednesday — 20 years after Pretoria's delegates were expelled from General Assembly business.

The conference on disaster reduction, set up by the U.N. Assembly, is the first U.N.-related body since then to give South Africa a full role in its deliberations, according to conference spokesman Mian Quadrad-Din.

South Africa under its apartheid regime, while never thrown out of the United Nations, earned a wide variety of sanctions, embargoes and recurring condemnation.

As it moved away from apartheid after 1990, non-binding economic, business, sporting and cultural sanctions voted by the General Assembly were all lifted.

Since non-racial elections in April and the installation of a black-led government on May 10, the last restrictions are fast

disappearing.

The U.N. Security Council meeting later Wednesday was expected to lift a mandatory arms embargo imposed in 1977.

In the coming weeks, the General Assembly appears certain to allow South Africa to resume its seat, suspended in 1974.

The Yokohama conference stole a march on the Assembly by "conditionally" recognising South Africa's delegation.

Mian Quadrad-Din said the credentials committee would meet Thursday and ratify the decision. "All the conditions for all these restrictions have disappeared. Today is a welcome for South Africa."

Meanwhile, Business, labour and the media Wednesday hailed President Nelson Mandela's speech to parliament in which he launched an attack on poverty but remained committed to fiscal discipline.

"Encouraging and reassuring," was the verdict of the

South African Chamber of Business (SACOB), which represents the bulk of the country's large companies.

A SACOB spokesman also said business was more than willing to support Mr. Mandela's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which aims to attack the backlogs in black areas created by apartheid.

Dealers said the market had reacted positively, especially to the re-appointment of central Reserve Bank Governor Chris Stals.

Market analysts also said the speech would give confidence to overseas investors who have been delaying their entry into South Africa until their was clarity on future economic policy.

Mr. Mandela focused on the RDP in his state of the nation address to parliament in Cape Town Tuesday, ending his speech with an appeal to all South Africans: "Let us get down to work."

Excuse me, officer, you've dropped your gun

LONDON (R) — British police have launched an inquiry into how two loaded police revolvers were found on the road after apparently falling off the roof of a squad car. Newspapers and television news reports said police had confirmed the incident but had declined to give more details.

A passer-by found the guns in the town centre of Blackburn, northern England Sunday and handed them in. They apparently fell off the roof of the police car, where they had accidentally been left a shift change-over, newspaper said.

The gaffe is likely to fuel a row over whether or not to provide guns for the traditionally unarmed British Police Force. The government last week announced it was easing rules for special armed response vehicles which patrol the streets of Britain's cities.

The change will allow crews in London to carry their weapons rather than keep them locked up in the boot. Police unions, arguing their members are increasingly coming under attack, have been arguing that the traditional British "bobbies" should be better protected.

China grows 'strawberries bigger than eggs'

BEIJING (R) — China has developed a new strain of strawberry "bigger than a chicken egg" and is now promoting it nationwide, the official Xinhua News Agency said Wednesday. The "Number Two Shimei" strawberry is both bigger and sweeter than those now imported from Japan, the news agency said, adding that one planted hectare could produce twice as many berries as the Japanese strain. "Development of the new strain of strawberries took experts nine years," Xinhua quoted officials at the Shijiazhuang Fruit Growing Research Institute as saying.

Cat urine may have sparked fire in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Japanese firemen suspect a blaze that destroyed a farmer's shed was caused by cat urine seeping into a bag of lime, a police spokesman said Wednesday. Nobody was hurt in the mysterious fire that broke out at Muroto-Shi, on the southern island of Shikoku, on April 24. The spokesman said investigators had found no evidence of arson. Cat urine "seems to be the strongest possibility at the moment," he added. The only clues found by firefighters sifting the debris were the bodies of two kittens and the burned remnants of a 50 kg (110 lb) bag of lime. Dampness makes lime highly inflammable but, the police spokesman said, it was sunny on the day of the fire. Moreover, the hut was in the mountains with no water source nearby. All these circumstances prompted investigators to surmise that the kittens' urine had trickled into the bag of lime, making it unstable and eventually igniting it. Farmers commonly use lime to improve soil condition.

Malaysia alarmed over young loafers

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysian youths spend an average of 16 hours a week, or one month of the year, hanging out at shopping complexes and recreational centres, the New Straits Times said Wednesday. A government survey of the "lepak" or loafing culture found that 71 per cent of those surveyed smoked, 40 per cent watched pornographic videos, 28 per cent gambled, 25 per cent drank alcohol and 14 per cent took hard drugs. The survey of 5,860 youths between the ages of 13 and 21, conducted by the Youth and Sports Ministry, is likely to come as a shock to many in Malaysia. Youth and Sports Minister Abdul Ghani Othman, who described the major findings of the survey at a university seminar, said the government was especially worried about the increase in hard-core use. He said 76,670 new heroin addicts were identified between 1990 and last year. Malaysian courts can impose the death sentence for even small amounts of hard drugs. Mr. Othman said the survey would form the basis of a nationwide plan to be launched by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad in the next aimed at tackling the "lepak" problem, the New Straits Times reported.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "هذا هو اصل" (This is the original)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australia withdraws World Cup bid

SYDNEY (R) — Australia withdrew its bid Wednesday to stage the World Cup in 2002, then immediately announced a bid to host the tournament four years later. The decision effectively amounted to a victory for the Australian Soccer Federation (ASF), the game's national governing body, over the Victorian state government. Last week, Victoria Premier Jeff Kennett announced a bid for the 2002 World Cup without consulting the ASF or any of Australia's other five states. The ASF had consistently favoured an application for 2006. "We are totally united in our bid for 2006," said ASF President Neville Wran following a two-hour meeting with Kennett at Sydney Airport. As part of the compromise deal, Melbourne, the Victorian capital, would host the final, while Sydney in New South Wales would stage the opening ceremony and first match. "This is not just a dream, it will be a great bid," said Kennett afterwards.

Olajuwon wins MVP award

NEW YORK (R) — Hakeem Olajuwon of the Houston Rockets was named the National Basketball Association's most valuable player Tuesday for the 1993-94 season. Olajuwon averaged 27.3 points and 11.9 rebounds per game in leading the Rockets to their second successive Midwest division title this season. Olajuwon was named NBA defensive player of the year for the second straight season last week. The Nigerian-born centre received 889 points, including 60 first-place votes, from a nationwide panel of 101 writers and broadcasters. Olajuwon, the first centre to win the MVP award since Moses Malone of the 76ers in 1982-83, was the only player named on all 101 ballots. David Robinson of the San Antonio Spurs finished second in the balloting with 25 first-place votes and 730 points. Scottie Pippen of the Chicago Bulls was third with seven first-place votes and 390 points. Shaquille O'Neal of the Orlando Magic was fourth with three first-place votes and 280 points and Patrick Ewing of the New York Knicks was fifth with one first-place vote and 255 points.

Violence mars Greek championship finale

ATHENS (R) — Violence marred Greek basketball again Tuesday, as Olympiakos clinched their second straight domestic championship after beating Paok Salonika 76-65 in the season's deciding game. Two seconds from time fouled flares and smoke filled the arena as Paok players rushed to the dressing room after one of them was hit on the head by a coin and the match was interrupted for 40 minutes. Korac Cup winners Paok returned after being reminded that a permanent walkoff would jeopardise their place in next season's European competitions. Olympiakos coach Yannis Ioannides made an impassioned plea to the 14,000 fans over the stadium's loudspeakers. Ferocious Greek fans have a record of trouble and basketball chiefs have warned previously of crowd misbehaviour could cost Athens next year's European nations championship.

Morrison knocks down Griffin

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Heavyweight Tommy Morrison knocked down Sherman Griffin in the first round and rolled to a 10-round unanimous decision Tuesday night. Morrison (41-2) caught Griffin with a leading right with 1:14 left in the first round and scored with a combination and seemed headed for an easy night. Griffin (14-3) wouldn't back down, catching Morrison repeatedly with uppercuts when they were against the ropes. But he could not put his opponent on the deck. Two judges scored it 98-91 and the third had 97-92. Morrison's knockdown was the only one in the fight, but Griffin came close on several occasions. Late in the third round, Morrison complained of a low blow and then fired three straight rights that stung Griffin as the bell sounded. Griffin opened a cut under Morrison's right eye with a left hook in the fourth round. The St. Louis fighter landed an overhand right along the ropes and finished with a right uppercut. He continued the pace in the fifth round with another right that cut Morrison's lower lip. From the fifth round on, it was a matter of who's legs would hold up. Griffin moved around the ring along the ropes and successfully drew Morrison in, allowing Griffin to land repeated uppercuts. Morrison found his stride in the eighth round with a left hook that sent Griffin reeling. By that point, both fighters were too tired to finish it off.

Veart signs for Sheffield United

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — Australian international striker Carl Veart was traded Wednesday by national champion Adelaide City to English first division club Sheffield United. The transfer fee was around \$600,000, Australian Associated Press reported. Veart was set to join English premier league team Everton last year, but the deal was delayed by work permit problems and eventually fell through. Veart scored 16 goals for Adelaide City in the 1993-94 season and starred for the club in its 3-0 victory over Sheffield United in an exhibition match last week. Veart, 24, currently is playing with the Australian national team in Japan.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

PRESERVE THE RUFF

First West vulnerable, last dealer

NORTH
♠ 4 2
♥ A Q J 10
♦ A Q J 10
♣ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

EAST
♠ K J 9
♥ K J 9
♦ K J 9
♣ K 8 7 3

SOUTH
♠ A 7 6 5 4 3
♥ 8 5 4
♦ 9 5 3
♣ 2

The bidding:
East South West North
1 NT 2 Dbl 3 Pass 4 5 6
Pass 5 Pass Pass Pass
Dbl Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: Ten of ♠

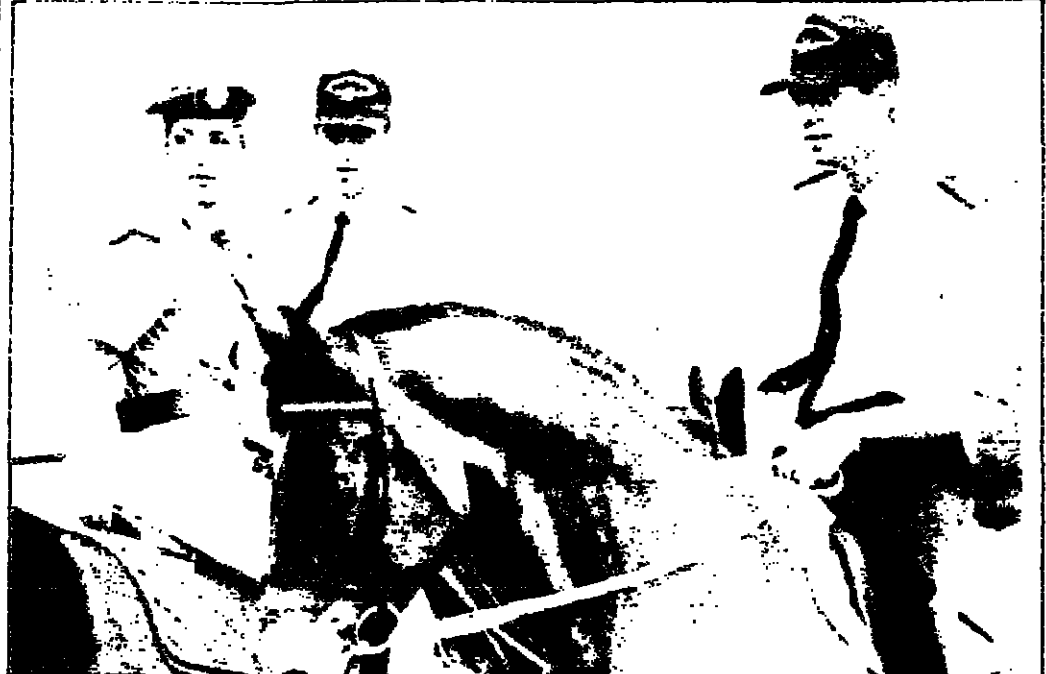
When you are a trick short of what you have contracted for, it is for the possibility of getting a trick by ruffing in the short trump hand. But be careful which suit you ruff.

West's second-round response was a transfer to hearts. North's double showed diamonds and, after East West had the heart game, North completed further in this suit.

East's bid of dummy, followed by a spade shift would have worked well here, but West not unreasonably led the singleton spade. Declarer made the most of the opportunity.

The opening lead was taken with the ace and declarer immediately crossed to the ace of clubs and took a ruffing finesse for the queen. Had East covered, declarer would have ruffed, drawn trumps and lost only one trick in each major. However, East ducked as declarer discarded a heart, then ducked again when the jack was led, allowing declarer to part with a second heart.

East was forced to ruff the next club with the king and it was tempting for South to ruff with the nine, but a solid hand the fulfilling trick if East held the ten of diamonds. However, there was a surer way. Declarer finessed the remaining heart. West ruffed, but a spade ruff in the second hand was the fulfilling trick. In all, declarer scored five tricks: trumps, two clubs, a spade and a heart ruff.



Her Royal Highness Princess Haya together with two Italian military colleagues during a training session in Rome Tuesday prior to the eighth International Horse Riding Championships which will last till May 30 (AFP photo)

Knicks hold off Pacers in conference finals opener

NEW YORK (R) — The New York Knicks, led by Patrick Ewing's 28 points, 11 rebounds and six blocked shots, held off the Indiana Pacers in the fourth quarter to win the first game of the Eastern Conference finals 100-89 Tuesday.

"We could easily have lost it," said Ewing. "They made a gallant effort to come back but we withstood it."

Came two of the best-of-seven series is Thursday in New York.

Indiana came back from a 16-point deficit to cut the Knicks' lead to two points with just over four minutes left, but New York guard Hubert Davis answered with a clutch 3-pointer to stem the tide.

"I saw a little daylight," said Davis. "I felt that I could make the shot and fortunately it went in for me."

Despite an 8-0 run by Indiana to start the game, New York built a 16-point lead in the first half, 53-37. Ewing scored 14 points in the first half and Charles Oakley, who finished with 20 points and 13 rebounds, had 12 in the half.

The Pacers trailed after three quarters, 70-63, but then gradually worked their way back into the game. When Vern Fleming hit a running bank shot with 4:08 remaining, the Knicks' lead was just 85-83.

"We got woken up tonight by their comeback, and it wasn't a quick one," said Davis. "They came back slowly, and that showed what kind of heart the Indiana Pacers have."

Indiana, seeded fifth in the east, had come back from double-digit deficits to "steal" playoff openers on the road against Orlando and Eastern Conference top seed Atlanta.

"We made a point at half-time about their comebacks in their games against Orlando and Atlanta," said New York coach Pat Riley. "We knew they would probably make a push and they did."

But after Davis's 3-pointer at 3:50 made it 88-83, the Pacers never came closer than six the rest of the way.

"The biggest play of the game was when they cut it to 85-83," said Riley. "Hubert Davis's 3-point shot, and then Charles Oakley made two unbelievable offensive tip-ins."

Indiana coach Larry Brown paid special tribute to Oakley. "I thought he was the difference," Brown said.

Riley felt that fatigue from New York's emotional game seven win Sunday over their old nemesis, the three-time defending champion Chicago Bulls, had taken a toll in the second half. "I think the game was won on sheer will in the second half," Riley said.

Rik Smits led Indiana with 27 points.

"Rik had a tremendous game," Ewing said. "I've got to stop letting him get the ball so deep."

New York got good play from all four guards, even though Johan Starks got just three points and Derek Harper five. Greg Anthony scored a career playoff-high 16 points with three 3-pointers and Davis had 12 points.

But most important, the Knicks guards held Indiana's leading scorer Reggie Miller to 14 points.

"We made Reggie earn his points," said Harper. "He didn't get too many good looks at the basket tonight."

Top-seeded Graf, Sampras advance in French Open

PARIS (AP) — After unexpected struggles, top seeds Steffi Graf and Pete Sampras advanced Wednesday to the third round of the French Open. Graf played poorly, and Sampras had his hands full with the youngest, worst-ranked player in the field.

Marcelo Rios, an 18-year-old Chilean ranked 283rd, forced Sampras into two closely fought tiebreakers before the No. 1-ranked Californian prevailed, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-4), 6-4.

Schoolchildren packed into Centre Court cheered boisterously for the Chilean, who played the biggest, best match of his life confidently in a backwards white baseball cap, gold earring and shoulder-length black hair.

"You have to give him a lot of credit," Sampras said. "He didn't let the situation make him nervous or intimidated... He came out swinging away, nothing to lose. That's the way it should be."

Sampras was joined in the third round by No. 4 seed Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine, who beat Nicklas Kulti of Sweden, 6-4, 7-6 (7-4), 4-6, 7-5.

Graf, pursuing her fifth consecutive Grand Slam title, was broken early in each set by 67th-ranked Stephanie Rottier of the Netherlands, but came back to win 7-5, 6-3.

Afterward, she was bluntly self-critical.

"I played badly," she said. "Even during the warmups I was thinking already I wasn't playing well."

The wins by Graf, Sampras and other seeds reversed a trend of first-round upsets. Three of the 16 seeded men and six of the women — including four of the top eight — lost their opening matches.

The disarray in the women's ranks has boosted the chances of lower seeds like No. 9 Lindsay Davenport, No. 10 Mary Joe Fernandez, No. 12 Mary Pierce and No. 15 Helena Sukova, all second-round winners Wednesday.

The 6-foot-2 (1.88-metre) Davenport, 17, overcame fellow American Chanda Rubin in the completion of a suspended match, 6-7 (7-2), 6-4.

Rios, winner of only \$17,980



Italy's Sylvia Farina jubilates after her match against Argentinean Gabriela Sabatini Tuesday during the first round of the French Open. Farina won 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 (AFP photo)

6-2. Fernandez routed Mexico's Angelica Gavaldon, 6-0, 6-1.

Pierce, raised in Florida but playing for France, crushed 17-year-old Maria Franco on Bentivoglio of Italy, 6-0, 6-1. She is the only seed left in her quarter of the draw and could make the semifinals — probably against Graf — without facing a highly ranked player en route.

"I try not to think about it and just concentrate on my game," Pierce said. "I hope I can get as far as the semifinals so I can play against Steffi. That would definitely be a very exciting match."

Sukova, a Czech, overtook Britain's Clare Wood, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Rios, winner of only \$17,980 in a brief pro-career, had squeaked into his first Grand Slam by winning three qualifying matches. He beat another little-known qualifier, Australia's Joshua Eagle, Monday, earning the right to second-round match with Sampras.

He described himself as an Andre Agassi fan, and said he felt no fear on Centre Court.

"When I started playing, I tried to concentrate on my game," he said. "I didn't try to think that I was playing good, with a lot of confidence."

Sampras, astonishingly out-aced by Rios 7 to 4, said he was content to "bring it out" from the baseline, rather than playing serve-and-volley.

Villeneuve sets Indy novice speed mark

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (AP) — The late Gilles Villeneuve would be proud of his son, the fastest rookie ever in the Indianapolis 500.

The former Formula One racer, killed in a 1983 crash in Canada, has passed his love of racing to a new generation.

"You always retain some things from your parents," Villeneuve said. "Hopefully I retained the good things."

Villeneuve was the fourth-fastest qualifier for Sunday's Indianapolis 500. He will start on row two, directly behind another second-generation driver, pole sitter Al Unser Jr. But unlike Unser, Canada's Villeneuve has had to overcome tragedy.

"My father died when I was 12 and I didn't get any encouragement from my mother," Villeneuve said. "It was maybe the best way to learn. You make your own mistakes. But I always knew I would race. No question. I was always in fast sports, like skiing or motor racing."

Villeneuve qualified at 226.259 mph (362.014 km/h) in a Cosworth-powered Reynard chassis. His speed was 4.5 mph (7.1 km/h) faster than any other Indy rookie ever timed and surpassed his wildest dreams.

"I never expected to be this fast," he said. "I was flat out in qualifying. It feels great to be on the second row."

Villeneuve is one of nine first-time Indy starters, but the only one in the first four rows. He is also the only newcomer with strong Formula One ties.

Villeneuve raced from 1989-1991 in the Italian Formula Three series, then spent 1992 on Japan's Formula Three circuit. He discovered the Indy car circuit while in Japan.

"Until two years ago, you hardly heard about Indy-car in Europe," Villeneuve said. "I couldn't read the papers in Japan so I didn't read about it there either. I saw the Indy 500 there for the first time in 1992 and it was quite exciting, even if I fell asleep because it was five in the morning. I woke up for the last lap, so it was OK."

Villeneuve raced in the Formula Atlantic series last season and announced his Indy-car bid eight months ago.

"I had wanted to come here a year earlier, but I didn't want to make a stupid decision and not go out with a top-level team behind me," Villeneuve said.

He drives for Australian native Barry Green, whose team is based here.

"The team is a winner. I'm the only inexperienced person," Villeneuve said. "What's important to going fast here is working well with the car and Barry has made this a most comfortable car."

Villeneuve made his debut in Australia, finishing 17th after bumping the car of rival Stefan Johansson of Sweden in a fight for fifth place.

Villeneuve qualified second-fastest at the second race of the year in Phoenix on his 23rd birthday.

Drivers concerned at instability of 'safer' Formula One cars

LONDON (R) — Two of Britain's leading Formula One racing drivers expressed concern Wednesday at the instability of the latest specification "safer" cars they will race in this weekend's Spanish Grand Prix.

In the wake of Portuguese Pedro Lamy's accident Tuesday while testing a Lotus at Silverstone — the latest in a series of crashes in Formula One — Mark Blundell and Martin Brundle expressed a lack of confidence about the safety levels of their cars.

Lamy was reported to be in a comfortable condition on Wednesday after breaking both kneecaps and a thigh in his 240 kph accident.

Blundell, who drives for the Tyrrell Team, said he felt the modified cars, with their downforce reduced by 25 per cent, were "a bit of a culture shock" and were not any safer than before.

Brundle, who finished second for McLaren in the recent Monaco Grand Prix, said he was more concerned about the timescale for the changes.

"Our car is not too bad," said Brundle. "But I want to reserve judgement — I want to drive it in the wet, where there's standing water."

Both drivers had tested their cars in the new configuration with 25 per cent less downforce at Silverstone last week.

The changes were forced upon their teams by the International Motor Racing Federation (FIA) after Austrian Karl Wendlinger suffered critical head injuries at the Monaco Grand Prix.

His accident followed the deaths of Austrian Roland Ratzenberger and three times world champion Brazilian Ayrton Senna at the ill-fated San Marino Grand Prix.

Blundell said of the new cars: "They're different. To be honest, it's a bit of a shock for a driver like me who is from the power-relative-to-grip generation."

In an interview with Motorist News, published Wednesday, Blundell was quoted saying: "For some of the others, like Martin, who were there in the days of 1,200 horsepower and low downforce, it may not be so bad. But for me it's daunting, partly because the changes have been made in such a short timescale. Some people seem to have lost sight of the point of the changes which were to make things safer."

"I wouldn't say these cars are now more dangerous but they're not any safer. They're 3.5 seconds a lap slower but they're no safer. There are going to be a few teams in Barcelona who haven't turned a wheel until Friday and I don't think that's making it safer."

Brundle said he felt there was significantly less grip.

"The car is less pure to drive. Before, it used to be an extension of yourself and would go where you pointed it. It reminds me of a few years ago in terms of the overall level of grip."

"Terminal speeds are the same and you arrive in the braking area at the same speed so if anything goes wrong that needs looking at. That's why I'd like to see a reduction in power to go with it."

Blundell said he was worried about the wet conditions which were a possibility at the Spanish Grand Prix.

He said: "What happens when it rains and you hit a puddle without so much downforce? You're just going to aquaplane. Barcelona can be tricky in the wet."

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FOR LOVE OR MONEY		1. Goodbye, Single Life		CONCORD "1"		The political comedy play		Today & Everyday		The political comedy play:	
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Arabic		THE GETAWAY		FORBIDDEN		Abu Awwad in social comedy:		"WHAT A PEACE!"	
Tom & Jerry		The star of the movie will attend the shows.		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		FORBIDDEN				(Al Salam Ya Salam)	
At 11:00		Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD "2"		Every night at 8:30 p.m.		"PUNCTURED BAG"		At: 8:30 p.m.	
		2. ALADDIN		A League Of Their Own						For reservations please call 625155	
		Shows: 11 a.m., 12:30, 2, 5:15 p.m.		Shows: 12:30, 3:45, 6, 8:15, 10:15							

TODAY

NEWS IN BRIEF

Somali peace talks open

NAIROBI (AFP) — The United Nations has sponsored a new round of peace talks in southern Somalia, but many Somali faction leaders failed to turn up, a U.N. spokesman said Wednesday. Leaders of a southern faction allied to warlord Mohamed Farah Aided were absent from the opening of the talks in the port city of Kismayu, attended by the leader of a rival group, Mohamed Said Hersi, known as "General Morgan," son-in-law of ousted ruler Mohamed Siad Barre. Mr. Aided's chief financier Osman Ato was there, but Somali analysts said it was unclear whether Mr. Ato was still a close advisor to the warlord. Kismayu, 500 kilometres south-west of the capital Mogadishu, has been repeatedly battered by fighting between two rival factions of the Somali Patriotic Movement, one led by Mr. Morgan and the other, allied with Mr. Aided, by Omar Jess.

Israeli tank kills one in Lebanon

MARIYOUN, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli troops killed a Lebanese farmer with tank fire in South Lebanon Wednesday after they apparently mistook him for a guerrilla, U.N. sources said. Rashid Mansour, 60, was working in the fields at 5 a.m. (0200 GMT) near the village of Taibeh when an Israeli patrol detected movement, said a U.N. officer in the area. A tank fired two cannon rounds, killing Mr. Mansour, said the officer of the Finnish battalion of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon. He spoke on condition of anonymity. Taibeh, about 4 miles (6 kilometres) west of Israel's northern Galilee panhandle, is policed by UNIFIL's Finnish battalion. The village sits on the edge of the eastern sector of an enclave Israel occupies in southern Lebanon as a "security zone" to shield its northern towns from cross-border guerrilla attacks. The incident came a day after Israeli warplanes attacked Shiite Muslim guerrilla bases in Iqim Al Tufah north of the security zone in apparent retaliation for rocket attacks on Israeli-held territory.

France evacuates 361 from Yemen

PARIS (R) — France said two of its naval vessels evacuated 361 foreigners from the northern Yemeni city of Hodeidah. The naval support ship Jules Verne and a landing craft took out 340 Djiboutis, 13 French, six Yemenis, a Canadian and a Somali, the Defence Ministry said in a statement. The vessels were expected in Djibouti Wednesday morning. After fighting erupted between forces in northern and southern Yemen earlier this month, French planes and warships evacuated 1,456 foreigners in a four-day operation.

Muslim rebels kill 15 Burmese soldiers

DHAKA (R) — Muslim rebels fighting for an independent homeland in west Burma's Arakan province said independent troops have detained some 20,000 Muslim villagers to work as army porters and to use as human shields against the guerrillas. The allegation was made in a statement by the rebel Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) faxed to news agencies in Bangladesh Tuesday night stating that its forces killed 15 Burmese soldiers in clashes last week. It said 11 soldiers were killed and several wounded when RSO guerrillas ambushed an army patrol on May 19 near Fansi village 48 kilometres north of Butthidaung township. Four other soldiers were killed and an unspecified number wounded in three other encounters between RSO and Burmese forces from May 19 to 21, it added. Earlier, the RSO claimed to have killed nine Burmese soldiers in a series of clashes between May 3 and 13 near Maungdaw township in Arakan.

Malawians surprised by Muluzi's cabinet

BLANTYRE (AFP) — The cabinet appointed by new Malawian President Bakili Muluzi surprised observers who had hoped he would appoint members of opposition parties to key portfolios in an attempt to bridge the tribal and regional divisions revealed by last week's elections. Mr. Muluzi's United Democratic Front (UDF) swept the vote in the south, but the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) of former President Hastings Kamuzu Banda took the central region and the Alliance for Democracy (AFD) won all parliamentary seats in the north. The UDF took 84 of the 177 parliamentary seats, five short of a working majority, and is negotiating a coalition with AFD, which won 36. The MCP won 55 seats, but Mr. Muluzi has ruled out any power sharing with Mr. Banda's party. It was widely anticipated that the new president would offer some senior cabinet posts to AFD. In particular, the home affairs portfolio was expected to go to AFD leader Chakufwa Chibana. Mr. Muluzi surprised analysts by offering the post to UDF lawyer Peter Fachi and leaving only a few minor posts available for AFD.

King Fahd to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan, a Pakistan government statement said Tuesday. Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto extended the invitation when she met the king this week during the annual Muslim pilgrimage of hajj to Saudi Arabia, the statement said. It gave no date for the visit.

Iran to continue dialogue with UAE

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said it favoured holding talks with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to try and resolve their sovereignty dispute over the Gulf island of Abu Musa. The Iranian news agency (IRNA) said Iranian parliament speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri Tuesday told a news conference "bilateral talks should continue to resolve the minor disputes between the two countries." But Mr. Nateq-Nouri said outsiders should not interfere in the islands dispute. IRNA said he was referring to a recent remark by Saudi Arabia's King Fahd "who sided with the UAE in its dispute with Iran over the island." Saudi Arabia's King Fahd in a joint statement with Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Sunday said Iran should "return three islands" to the UAE to improve Tehran's relations with Gulf Arab states. The UAE said Iran in 1992 virtually annexed Abu Musa, jointly controlled by the two countries under an agreement in 1971. In response the UAE reasserted its claims to the two Greater and Lesser Tumb Islands which Iran occupied in 1971 under the late shah. Talks have been stalled since last year. Iran rejects any link between Abu Musa and the other two islands.

Syria regrets article about Jews

WASHINGTON (AP) — Syrian officials, responding to a complaint by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, say they regret publication of an article in the Syria Times that asserted Jews had undue influence over U.S. foreign policy and American media. The article in the English-language newspaper appeared before Mr. Christopher flew to Damascus last week for talks with President Hafez Assad and Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa on a settlement with Israel. It said Jews operating behind the scenes had taken charge of foreign policy and the media, and that 30 per cent of Protestant bishops were Jews. Mr. Christopher condemned the article when reporters brought it to his attention and instructed Ambassador Christopher Ross to register a complaint with the Syrian government. Mr. Ross pointed out the article was full of errors, fact and analysis, reflected badly on Syria "and was written in an inflammatory tone reminiscent of Nazi propaganda," said Michael McCurry, the State Department spokesman. "The Syrian officials expressed regret about the content and tone of the article," he said. "The article had no official sanction by the government and had no official status," Mr. McCurry said. While the government has "a substantial control and say over things that appear in the media," the United States is unable to determine whether the article on Jews was commissioned, he said.

Trade Centre defendant's family say Israeli plot

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

ZARQA — The Jordanian mother and father of a man sentenced for bombing New York's World Trade Centre have proclaimed his innocence, saying he was a victim of an Israeli plot to smear the reputation of Arabs in the West.

Their son, Mohammad Salameh, 26, was among four Muslim "fundamentalists" sentenced Tuesday to 240 years each in prison by a U.S. federal judge in New York. The parents told Reuters Tuesday night that Israeli intelligence had framed him.

"God wreak vengeance on the judge and Israel, the whole world knows my son is innocent... it's an unjust sentence. I will continue to cry forever," said the sobbing 45-year-old mother of 11 children. In sentencing Mr. Salameh, U.S. District Judge Kevin Duffy called him a "sneak and a coward" and said the target that was chosen was intended "to kill the greatest number of people possible."

Mr. Salameh, a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian descent, was arrested last year after he tried to get a \$400 deposit back on a yellow rental van that contained the bomb.

The Feb. 26, 1993 bomb, which ripped through the garage level of the skyscraper at lunchtime, killed six people and injured more than 1,000 and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage.

The blast shocked Americans with the realisation that the United States was no longer safe from such violence.

"Where is democracy in America? It's only because my son is a Muslim they framed him," Mr. Salameh's mother said.

She was speaking to reporters at the family's modest home in Zarqa, 25 kilometres



An artist's sketch shows the four defendants in the World Trade Centre trial speaking to U.S. District Judge Kevin Duffy (right) before their sentencing. (Left to right) Mohammad Salameh, Nidal Ayyad, and Mahmud Abouhalima were each given 240 year prison terms while Ahmad Ajaj (right) was to be sentenced later. The prosecution team sits in front of the defendants (AFP photo)

from Amman, where many Palestinian refugees took up residence after being forced to leave the West Bank after Israel captured it in 1967.

Her husband, Amin Salameh, 52, a retired lieutenant in the Jordanian army, said: "How could they have sentenced him for 240 years? I will appeal this unjust sentence made in the shadow of American justice which boasts of its fairness."

Mr. Amin said he was convinced that his son Mohammad was a victim of a "frameup by the Israeli intelligence to smear the reputation of the Arabs and Muslims."

He said the sentence made him lose what little faith he had in American justice and democracy. "When I heard the sent-

ence, I asked myself where is justice, democracy and human rights which America says it defends and stands for."

Mr. Amin said Mohammad, the eldest of his children, had gone to the United States to help support his large family.

His mother said the sentence was a cruel punishment to his brothers and sisters who had set high hopes that Mohammad would one day raise them out of their plight.

"The court has told the family 'go die of hunger'," she said. "My son is not an evil man and never committed a crime in his life, his pages are white."

Ramzi, 18-year-old brother of Mohammad, said: "Israeli intelligence Mossad saw

along that the governments of the United States and Israel were using him to smear the image of Islam."

"I no longer trust the legal system of the United States," said the Newark, New Jersey, resident, who is visiting her family in Jordan with her 8-month-old baby, Assem.

"I am going to appeal the verdict," she said in a cracked voice.

Mr. Ayyad's father-in-law, Abdullah Ghaboun, accused the U.S. administration "of attempting to find another monster for an enemy after communism."

"They (Americans) want to use Nidal and the other defendants in the World Trade Centre bombing as a pretext to launch a war against Islam," said Mr. Ghaboun, who visited Nidal last week at his prison in New York.

Mr. Ayyad is of Palestinian extraction, but held a Jordanian passport and grew up in Kuwait before going to the United States where he acquired American citizenship in 1985.

The four defendants sentenced Tuesday are all deeply religious Muslims of Arab descent and some are followers of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the Egyptian cleric whose prosecutors allege advocates violence against religious enemies.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman is charged in a second case to be tried this fall for inspiring followers to "levy a war of urban terrorism" in this country.

The U.S. government alleges that Sheikh Abdul Rahman led a conspiracy dating back to 1991 to punish the United States for its support of Israel and Egypt.

He was indicted for leading more than a dozen others in a plot to blow up New York City landmarks including the World Trade Centre and the United Nations.

COLUMN

Tramp saved by Diana

LONDON (R) — A tramp saved by Princess Diana from drowning in a central London lake said she was a "miracle lady" straight out of the pages of a fairytale. "To be saved by a princess is beyond the dreams of a tramp. The lady's a miracle to me... It's like a fairytale," Martin O'Donoghue told the Daily Mirror newspaper. Mr. O'Donoghue, 42, said Princess Diana, estranged wife of heir to the throne Prince Charles, visited him twice in hospital where he lay unconscious for five days after the incident 10 days ago. Princess Diana had rushed to the edge of a lake in London's central Regent's Park to help pull Mr. O'Donoghue out of the water. Finnish Student Karl Kotila then gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. On her first visit Princess Diana left him £5 (\$7.5) in a "get well" card that carried the message "wishing you a quick recovery" — from Diana. "Later she dropped in to see the Irish-born vagrant again. She smiled, touched his hand and said: 'God bless you, Paddy.' Paddy is a common nickname for people of Irish descent. In return for her kindness, Mr. O'Donoghue said he offered Princess Diana a gypsy blessing. Diana was returning to her London home by car after jogging in the park when her chauffeur was stopped by a group of anxious tourists who spotted the tramp falling off a bridge. Mr. O'Donoghue, who lives in a park shed, said he jumped off the bridge to avoid a dog that had attacked him. He had aimed for the bank but because he was half-drunk he fell in the water. "I just can't believe I survived. God must have had a hand in it," he said. He discharged himself from hospital Sunday.

Britain awards national lottery licence to Camelot

LONDON (R) — Britain's office of the National Lottery, after months of secret deliberations, said Wednesday it had chosen Camelot Group PLC ahead of seven other groups to operate its new National Lottery. The Camelot Group is made up of confectionary giant Cadbury Schweppes PLC, Gtech Holdings Corp which supplies lottery equipment in 24 countries, specialist printer De La Rue, Racial Electronics PLC and Japanese-owned computer firm ICL. National Lottery Director General Peter Davis said Camelot was best placed to run the lottery "with due propriety," protecting the interests of participants and maximising net proceeds. The licence is due to be formally awarded in July. The National Lottery is widely tipped to be the biggest in the world and turnover could reach £4 billion (\$6 billion) a year, leisure analysts say. The government plans to spend half of that money on prizes and has said it will take 12 per cent in tax. Around a quarter of proceeds are expected to go to the government's five designated "good causes" — the arts, sports, heritage, charity and a millennium fund to celebrate the year 2000 — and the operator will take the rest to cover costs and profit.

Life of former premier wins U.K. richest book prize

LONDON (R) — An authorised biography of former Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath won Britain's richest literary award confounding bookmakers who tipped another work to win. Scottish author John Campbell's "A Biography" won out over competing works on the lives of a British poet, a Spanish dictator and an Irish nationalist. Bookmakers Ladbrokes had tipped Andrew Motion's biography of poet Philip Larkin to win £7.4 and made Robert Keel's work on Irish patriot Charles Stewart Parnell second favourite at £9. Campbell, 47, who has previously written books about British politicians Lloyd George, Roy Jenkins and Nye Bevan, was awarded the £25,000 (\$37,600) prize for non-fiction at a glittering dinner for 300 guests in London's Savoy Hotel. Mr. Heath, 78, still a serving member of parliament, was prime minister from 1970 to 1974 and took Britain into the European Common Market. He was ousted from the Conservative Party leadership by Margaret Thatcher.

Mandela seeks meeting with neo-Nazi leader

CAPE TOWN (Agencies) — President Nelson Mandela said Wednesday he was seeking to meet neo-Nazi leader Eugene Terre Blanche to discuss his demands for a separate white homeland and amnesty for jailed rightists.

Mr. Mandela said after talks with right-wing leader Ferdi Hartzenberg in Cape Town he hoped a peaceful solution could be found to assuage right-wing fears about black majority rule following last month's historic elections.

"We discussed Mr. Terre Blanche's involvement in ultra-right activities," Dr. Hartzenberg and I are planning that there should be a meeting between the three of us as soon as possible," Mr. Mandela told reporters.

Mr. Hartzenberg, leader of the Conservative Party (CP) which like the AWF (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) wants a separate Afrikaner homeland, said he would seek the talks in the name of peace.

"I am going to approach Mr. Terre Blanche because I think such a meeting will be to the benefit of our country and for peace," he told reporters.

Mr. Mandela said he discussed with Mr. Hartzenberg demands for an amnesty for rightwingers, including 33 AWF members standing trial for a bomb blitz before the country's first all-race elections on April 26-29 which swept the ANC to power.

They also discussed granting a broadcast licence to the rebel Radio Pretoria and self-determination for Afrikaners. Mr. Mandela said an amnesty was "premature." Justice Minister Bulelwa Omar was drafting legislation on the issue which would be presented to parliament next week for debate, he said.

IAEA team completes inspection of N. Korean facility

VIENNA (AFP) — Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have completed their inspection of a North Korean nuclear reprocessing facility after taking samples, IAEA officials said in Vienna Wednesday.

The samples should allow the IAEA to determine whether plutonium could have been manufactured or diverted to the Yongbyon laboratory, located 90 kilometres (55 miles) north of the North Korean capital Pyongyang, possibly for use in making nuclear bombs.

Plutonium is a key element for making nuclear bombs. Earlier Wednesday IAEA spokesman Hans-Friedrich

Black Sea Fleet deal remains evasive

MOSCOW (R) — Russian-Ukrainian talks on sharing out the Black Sea Fleet and defusing tensions over Ukraine's Crimean peninsula seemed far from success Wednesday.

A Russian official told journalists the two sides had prepared a package of agreements that, among other things, outlined problems involved in splitting the fleet. But it seemed to stop short of the final settlement both sides anxiously seek.

By Wednesday afternoon, on the third day of talks, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin had withdrawn from the negotiations, leaving the field to expert groups.

Uncertainty over control of the former Soviet fleet only compounds tensions between the two states over the Crimean peninsula where the ships are based.

The political leadership of Crimea, a Ukrainian territory with a big Russian majority, last week adopted a new constitution that loosens ties with Kiev and moves the peninsula towards realignment with Russia.

Kiev accuses "nationalist forces" in Russia of encouraging the move as a step towards reabsorbing Crimea and then Ukraine itself.

President Boris Yeltsin insists he has no claim on the peninsula, part of the Russian Federation until transferred to Ukraine in 1954. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, however, detected an imperious lecturing tone in Mr. Yeltsin's declaration last week that use of force be ruled out in the dispute.

Nationalist sensitivities run high on both sides and reports of Ukrainian troop movements, denied by Kiev, have abounded in the Moscow press.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, speaking at a meeting of Baltic leaders in Estonia Wednesday, said Russia had no territorial ambitions of any kind.

"There is no border question in Europe," he said. "If there were one we would open a Pandora's box... I think there is no question of discussing borders, neither with Ukraine nor with Latvia nor Estonia."

The danger facing both sides in the Crimean issue is that the militant Crimean administration could force the issue of autonomy and, ultimately, independence.

Mr. Kravchuk, in a crisis, could come under strong pressure to act decisively to pre-

serve control over the peninsula. The nightmare then is of a Black Sea Fleet, its fate still not formally resolved, being forced to choose allegiance between Russia and Ukraine.

The Russian view is that Ukraine should base its ships in Balaklava and Donuzlav, leaving the fleet headquarters of Sevastopol, on the Crimean peninsula, under Russian control, but not sovereignty.

Ukraine, however, insists on the right to station some ships in Sevastopol, which would be the headquarters of the Ukrainian fleet as well as of the Russian one.

At talks in Sevastopol last month, Russia and Ukraine worked out a formula on dividing the fleet. But the meeting broke up in acrimony over where to base each country's navy.

Ethnic Russians make up about 70 per cent of the 2.7 million residents of Crimea.

Ukraine offered Crimea broad autonomy after independence from Moscow. But economic collapse prompted Crimeans to elect Russian nationalist Yuri Meshkov president in January and vote heavily for closer ties with Moscow in a March referendum.

Russia attacks Estonian human rights

TALLINN (R) — Moscow Wednesday delivered a stinging attack on the treatment of Russian speakers in Estonia and made clear that withdrawal of its troops from the republic would depend on respect for minority human rights.

A memorandum to the Council of the Baltic Sea states from the Russian delegation, led by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, accused Estonia of discriminating against Russian speakers and of forcing them to leave the country.

"It gives rise to deep concern that the process of establishing an independent Estonian state is accompanied by the non-Russian population being forced out of the country," the memorandum said.

Estonian Foreign Minister Juri Luik, who Tuesday held two hours of talks with Mr. Kozyrev to try to reach a deal which would lead to Russia pulling its 2,500 troops out of Estonia, said he was saddened by the attack.

"We are a little bit sad because the atmosphere was really good but I think we will get over it."

The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania won independence in 1991 after a failed hardline coup against then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. But the issue of

former Soviet troops have soured Moscow's relations with all three.

Russia has withdrawn forces from Lithuania and has agreed to pull its 10,500 troops out of Latvia by the end of August. But it has no deal with Estonia yet.

The memorandum, which Mr. Kozyrev said had been leaked, said Estonian laws on citizenship, language, education and in other spheres discriminated against Russians in the country.

"It speaks for itself that up to now only about 30,000 of the absolute majority of the 400,000 Russians who would like to become citizens of this country have been able to do so," the memorandum said.

Mr. Kozyrev told a news conference a new regional human rights watchdog appointed by the council would tackle the issue.

"I hope the high commissioner appointed at this meeting will also address these issues and help us to solve this problem. We cannot just close our eyes and not see them," Mr. Kozyrev said.

The position of Estonia's 40 per cent Russian minority, including thousands of military pensioners, has become linked with talks on troop withdrawal between Tallinn and Moscow.

Tallinn says the questions of troops and the rights of pensioners are not linked, but Mr. Kozyrev insisted there would be no deal without resolving both issues. "We are negotiating a package which would include withdrawal of those troops and protection of the rights of those pensioners," he said.

After Tuesday's meeting between Mr. Kozyrev, Mr. Luik and Estonian President Lennart Meri, both sides spoke of their common will to reach agreement as soon as possible.

They agreed to arrange meetings to try to forge a deal and Mr. Luik said the first meeting would be in Tallinn.

Tension over the troops overshadowed the two-day meeting of the council, which groups Russia, the three Baltic states, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Germany and Poland.

In a closing communique, the ministers expressed their conviction "that the withdrawal of foreign troops from Estonia and Latvia will be prompt, complete and orderly."

Former Danish Justice Minister Ole Espersen was named as the region's first commissioner on democratic rights and institutions, including the rights of members of minorities.